

# **Interstate Management of Transnational Conflict**

*A study of the African Union's security politics  
in the Great Lakes region*

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# Abstract

This thesis provides an evaluation of the African Union's contribution to the management of transnational conflict in the Great Lakes region. Regarding transnational aspects of conflict, it is mainly focused on militarized refugees, "ordinary" refugees and the relationship between African warring parties. Furthermore, I emphasize different notions of security, arguing that an approach including "alternative" security notions is necessary in contributing to the management of transnational conflict. In order to describe the processes characterizing the Great Lakes conflicts, the theoretical concepts of neopatrimonialism and trans-state regionalization are applied, in addition to transnationalism. Furthermore, Regional Security Complex theory is introduced in order to illustrate the interrelated security concerns of the Great Lakes states.

The findings show that the AU in many instances fails to address important aspects of transnational conflict. In the Great Lakes, "war is better than peace" for many of the actors involved. The AU's member states in the Great Lakes region are involved in activities working to counteract formal regionalist efforts and the regimes have their own interests in the current conflicts. As an interstate organization, the AU falls short of responding to the way state and non-state actors are intertwined in complex networks contributing to the sustenance of conflict.

I also emphasize the AU's security cooperation with relevant sub-regional initiatives. Furthermore, the role of the UN in the Great Lakes is shortly introduced in order to contextualize the AU's security-political initiatives. The large amount of interstate actors involved in the Great Lakes makes the conflict management efforts in the region fragmented. I argue that a regional approach is a necessarily component in contributing to conflict management. However, it is not sufficient. In order to address transnational conflict, it is crucial to identify and address all the actors involved in conflict. However, the AU falls short of addressing the role the states have in sustaining a conflict dynamic that operates outside formal interstate politics.



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Anja Wedde Sveen

# List of abbreviations

ADFL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CADSP	Common African Defense and Security Policy
CAR	Central African Republic
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
CEPGL	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECA	(United Nations) Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAR	Armed Forces of Rwanda
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IR	International Relations
IRRI	International Refugee Rights Initiative
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRA	New Regionalisms Approach
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department
REC	Regional Economic Community
RSC	Regional Security Complex
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UN	United Nations
US	United States



# 1.0 Introduction

“Too many attempts at resolving conflicts in Africa have failed. One reason for this is probably the economic opportunities many actors see in violent conflicts. In wars they have possibilities that they would never have in peace” (Dokken 2008:169).

## 1.1 Background

Most violent conflicts in Africa cross international borders and have consequences beyond the state in which they originate. This is primarily related to various so-called transnational aspects existent in the continent's regions. Transnationalism is a kind of interaction across state borders between both state and non-state actors. The weakness of the African state makes the borders “porous” and paves the way for such transnational activity (Dokken 2008:36, 46-47). In other words there is a close relationship between the phenomenon of transnationalism and the characteristics of most African conflicts of today. The Great Lakes region<sup>1</sup> is arguably one of the most conflict prone regions in Africa, and gives a good example of how transnationalism can lead to the regionalization of violent conflict. A decade of violence commenced with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which resulted in large flows of refugees into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The conflict spread further into the Congolese society and ended up as a regionalized war involving a large number of countries, armed movements and militias (ibid:49, Ulriksen 2004:518). All the Great Lakes states have experienced the impact of conflict and instability in neighboring states at the national level. Armies, militias, refugees and civilians can all cross porous borders in the region (Westerkamp et al 2009:10). The conflicts in the Great Lakes region are now woven together through strategic elite alliances, through regional (formal and informal) economy and trade networks, through the steady stream of militarized and “ordinary” refugees and through the large number of mercenaries moving between the countries (Dokken 2008:65).

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<sup>1</sup> This is a term that is somewhat loose. Different countries are in different instances included in the understanding of what comprises the Great Lakes region. A minimum definition is often understood to include Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda (Lemarchand 2006:25). This will be thoroughly discussed in section 1.3.6.

During the Cold war, Africa was partitioned into ideological spheres and worked as a battleground for East-West rivalry. Proxy wars played out in different parts of the continent (Francis 2006:46). With the end of the Cold War, however, the continent lost its strategic relevance, and African states have been forced to form security-political strategies of their own. In addition to various sub-regional organizations, the African states have formed a continental organization that has peace and security as one of its main purposes, namely the African Union (AU or the Union). The AU's predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), never managed to develop a functioning security policy. The principles of national sovereignty and noninterference in the internal affairs of other states were largely responsible for that. OAU members were committed to respecting the territorial integrity and independence of all African countries. This has changed with the establishment of the AU (Dokken 2008:18-20). Although the Union underlines that every African state is sovereign, African leaders now acknowledge that the security of individual states is inseparably linked to that of other African countries (ibid:124).

To be able to contribute to peace in Africa, the AU has to develop security-political strategies that address how transnational factors are important for the triggering and sustenance of violent conflict. Thomas Risse-Kappen (1995:3) defines transnationalism as "[...] regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization". This means that different actors, both state and non-state, must be addressed in the Union's conflict management efforts. At least on paper, the AU takes a proactive role when it comes to the security challenges the continent is facing, but the organization might still suffer from many of the same maladies as its predecessor. The AU's acknowledgement of how the security concerns of African countries are interconnected does not mean that it manages to respond to the transnational aspects of African conflicts. The OAU was deeply subordinated to the demands of state maintenance and the survival strategy of individual rulers (Clapham 2003:xiii). Given that it is an interstate organization, the AU is still subjected to the views and demands of state actors. In Africa, state policies are often

directed towards regime survival rather than trying to address the underlying causes of conflicts.

## 1.2 Research question

The way in which violent conflicts in Africa to an increasing extent become regionalized makes it essential with a regional approach to dealing with them. Further, these conflicts often have important transnational characteristics. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to discuss the AU's contribution to transnational conflict management. The Great Lakes region will be used as a case study. The regional interrelatedness of the conflicts is critical to any attempt at resolving them. Peace and security in one part of the region cannot be separated from security in the region as a whole (Westerkamp et al 2009:7).

The existence of strong leaders in the Great Lakes has been a factor that has been decisive in triggering and sustaining most conflicts in the region, alone and in alliance with one another. In addition, armed groups have received support from state actors for ideological, economic, ethnic, and strategic reasons. Political networks of this kind have been of great importance for the regional conflict dynamic (Dokken 2008:72). In other words, the AU's security politics in the Great Lakes operate within a framework of state actors with their own interests in the current conflicts. The research question will be as follows: *Given the transnational character of the conflicts<sup>2</sup> in the Great Lakes, can the AU, as an interstate organization, develop responses that contribute to conflict management?*

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Wallensteen (2007:15) defines *conflict* as: "a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources". Further, *armed conflict* can be defined as "[...] contested incompatibility which concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths" (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 2001:643). The Great Lakes has to a large extent experienced armed conflict. However, the types of conflict in the region exceed what goes under this definition. Both definitions are therefore useful to mention here.

## **1.3 Scope of research**

### ***1.3.1 Definition of conflict management***

The concepts of conflict prevention, management and resolution can be seen as separate but interdependent components of a comprehensive conflict maintenance system. There are wide spectrums of opinion regarding the precise meanings of these concepts (Levitt 2001:46). However, given the scope of this thesis, I will only give a brief introduction to their respective meanings.

The political aim of *conflict prevention* should be to avert conflict altogether, or at the least to defuse it in its initial stages. The objective of *conflict management*, on the other hand, is to prevent the further escalation of conflict and to establish security and stability (through measures such as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peace-enforcement or humanitarian intervention). *Conflict resolution* is the last conflict maintenance process and represents the linchpin to sustainable peace. The political objective of conflict resolution should be to maintain and sustain peace by building and/or re-building civil society and state institutions (ibid: 46-47).

As follows from this description, the concepts are intertwined and one can apply different concepts when addressing the various aspects of the responses to conflict in the Great Lakes. When using the term “conflict management” in my research question, it is with an acknowledgement that the concepts can be applied representing different stages in a conflict maintenance system. However, as will be shown throughout this thesis, the conflict dynamic in the Great Lakes is complex. At this stage it is not possible to speak of the general solution to transnational conflict, rather it is necessary to address issues aiming at achieving increased security and stability. It is therefore most relevant to speak of conflict management.

### ***1.3.2 Limitations***

For the most part, the Great Lakes has steadily entered a post-conflict phase, although violent conflict still confronts parts of the region. Some states are further along in (re)building institutions of order than others (Khadiagala 2008:2). This illustrates that



conflict in the Great Lakes of course includes important local variations. Nonetheless, the aim here is to address transnational conflict and focus on regional conflict dynamics. Although some states have progressed more than others regarding peace and security, the prospects for bringing about security for the region as a whole are still poor (ibid).

My analysis will be limited by the fact that actual implementation of many of the security-political efforts I will discuss is yet to happen. Concerning the AU, lack of implementation is often related to factors that will not be discussed here, such as shortages of resources and funding. However, in order to assess whether or not security policies *should* be implemented, it is important to analyze them *as such*, meaning whether the AU can develop responses that can contribute to the management of transnational conflict.

The scope of this thesis prevents me from going deep into all aspects of neither the conflicts in the Great Lakes nor the conflict responses in the region. For instance, the UN is one of the primary actors when it comes to security-political initiatives in the Great Lakes. The UN has been deployed in the DRC since 1999, through their peacekeeping mission MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo).<sup>3</sup> However, the UN's initiatives will only be discussed in order to contextualize the AU's attempts at conflict management and to underscore the importance of a regional approach to transnational conflict. The focus of this thesis is on "African solutions to African problems". This does not mean that the work of the UN is considered irrelevant, rather that it is useful to study whether African organizations themselves can develop security-political strategies that can contribute to the management of the transnational conflicts the continent is facing.

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<sup>3</sup> The UN mission in the DRC is formerly known as MONUC (United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo). However, from July 2010 the mission was renamed together with an extended mandate following Resolution 1925 (2010) in the UN Security Council, deciding that the forces shall be deployed in the DRC until 30 June 2011 (UN 2010: paragraph 1).

### ***1.3.3 Transnational aspects of conflict***

Transnational aspects of African conflicts include the recycling of small arms and light weapons, mercenaries and militarized refugees, ordinary refugees, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and personal alliances and general relationships between African warring parties (Dokken 2010:334). When discussing the AU's contribution to conflict management in the Great Lakes, I will address most of these facets. However, not all aspects will be directly dealt with in my analysis. For instance, recycling of small arms and light weapons can be linked to the other conflict responses I will discuss, although it will not be explicitly in focus. Control over small arms trade across the Great Lakes borders is both in the hands of private persons and subject to the strategies of political elites in the various countries. Parts of the problematic of small arms trade is therefore related to state actors. The role of state actors in the sustenance of conflict is an aspect that will be discussed thoroughly. In addition, the users of such weapons are actors such as militarized and ordinary refugees. The proliferation of small arms is therefore also related to the continuing presence of such groups. Further, control over the small arms trade in border areas is limited. An important point for analysis is therefore to discuss the AU's way of dealing with porous borders in the Great Lakes (Dokken 2008:66).

This illustrates how conflict in the Great Lakes is characterized by processes that cannot be seen apart from one another. Different actors and conflict dynamics are in various ways intertwined. This means that an important aim when discussing transnational conflict is to show how state and non-state actors are interconnected, and use examples to illustrate this. Furthermore, discussing the extent to which the AU can contribute to conflict management will also include making judgment about how the management of transnational conflict ought to be. Thus, by evaluating the Union's security political initiatives in the Great Lakes, I will also identify different mechanisms that arguably will lead to the management of transnational conflict.

### **1.3.4 Sub-questions**

The traditional definition of security studies is the “study of the threat, use and control of military force”. The state had a privileged place in traditional security studies, where security was seen as protection of the state from external threats (Hentz 2003:3, Francis 2006:86). In the wake of the Cold War, the state-centric notion of security has been heavily challenged. Among the alternatives to state-centric concepts of security are human and international security (Mills and Norton 2002:12). In this thesis I will argue that in order to contribute to the management of transnational conflict, the AU’s approaches must be based on a notion of security that encompasses both state security and non-military security aspects. For instance, the concept of human security includes non-state actors as referents in security studies, which is important in relation to transnational conflict (Francis 2006:86). Furthermore, international security includes the region as a referent in security studies, and illustrates how there can be threats to countries at the regional level (Hentz 2003:4, Dokken 2008:2). My first sub-question is thus: *Is the AU focusing on all the security aspects necessary in order to contribute to the management of transnational conflict in the Great Lakes?*

The AU regards cooperation with sub-regional organizations as decisive for the success of the organization’s peace and security politics. Therefore, an analysis of the AU’s responses needs to encompass the organization’s relationship with relevant sub-regional institutions. The main focus of this thesis will be on the AU’s efforts to construct regional peace and security. This is important because the way in which African states and organizations practice security is to a large extent related to the work of the Union, as it is the leading political body in Africa. However, the analysis must be situated within a framework of cooperation on peace and security issues between the AU and other relevant regional institutions (Dokken 2008:20). My second sub-question is thus: *Can the AU, in cooperation with relevant interstate actors at the sub-regional level, contribute to the management of the transnational Great Lakes conflicts?*

### ***1.3.5 The African Union's peace and security architecture***

When analyzing the Union's contribution to conflict management, it will especially be focused on the Peace and Security Council (PSC). The process leading to the establishment of the PSC started in 2002, when the AU adopted the 'Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council' (the PSC protocol).<sup>4</sup> The AU had realized that Africa should develop military mechanisms to deal with the common security threats that undermine the promotion of peace and security on the continent (Dokken 2008:128). In 2004, the African heads of state decided to adopt a 'Common African Defence and Security Policy' (CADSP). The CADSP aims to deal with conflicts both directly and indirectly, through preventive diplomacy and rapid interventions in conflict zones. The PSC Protocol and the CADSP form the legal underpinning of the continental peace and security architecture. The PSC is the implementation organ for the policy framework of the CADSP (Dokken 2008:128, Engel and Porto 2010:3). The PSC is a standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the continent and for facilitating timely and efficient response to conflicts and crisis situations in Africa (AU 2002, article 2.1). Thus, my analysis will discuss the AU's conflict management efforts after the establishment of the PSC.

The AU has divided Africa into five different zones, each represented by one or two regional intergovernmental organizations, often referred to as Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Within the CADSP, these RECs are supposed to be the implementing actors of the all-African strategy on peace and security. The PSC foresees a close collaboration with these RECs (Dokken 2008:130). In general, it is therefore relevant to study the AU's contribution to conflict management in cooperation with relevant RECs. However, the Great Lakes states are members of different and overlapping RECs, some of them with conflicting agendas and projects (Westerkamp et al 2009:16). As I will argue throughout this thesis, there are obvious challenges related to the fact that the Great Lakes states are members of RECs with overlapping mandates and agendas, while none of these have the Great Lakes *as such*

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<sup>4</sup> The protocol was adopted in Durban in 2002 and entered into force in December 2003.

as their area of focus. These factors must therefore be critically addressed in my analysis. However, conflict management in the Great Lakes region has the later years been linked up to the projects agreed upon at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) (Church and Jowell 2007:18). According to the Head of the PSC secretariat Dr. Admore Kambudzi, the ICGLR is an attempt at harmonizing the politics in the region in the absence of an all-encompassing REC, and it is meant to act as an umbrella organization for the Great Lakes (Kambudzi 2010 [interview]). It is therefore of crucial importance to include the AU's cooperation with the ICGLR in my analysis. This is a regional institution in which all the Great Lakes states are members, and that should be seen as working with the AU's PSC (Church and Jowell 2007:18).

### ***1.3.6 Defining “the Great Lakes region”***

It is difficult to define exactly where the Great Lakes starts and where it ends. For instance, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002:215) defines the geographical region to include the DRC, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. However, the term “Great Lakes region” is most commonly used when it is referred to the “core” of the region. According to Rene Lemarchand (2006:25), a minimal definition of the core area should include Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Congo and South-western Uganda. An obvious point of departure for defining “the Great Lakes” in this thesis would be to use the AU's definition. However, the AU does not have a clear definition of what comprises the Great Lakes region. This can be related to the fact that this region does not constitute a “zone” encompassed by one of the Union's RECs. Still, although the AU has not defined exactly which countries that comprise the Great Lakes, the organization has developed conflict responses that are directed specifically towards this region (see AU 2007a, AU 2009a: paragraph 8).

Eleven states are members of the ICGLR, namely Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), The Republic of Congo, the DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. Not all of these countries can be defined as Great Lakes states, however, they are included in the ICGLR because they consider themselves linked with the situation in the region and affected by the conflicts. These

countries include Angola, the Republic of Congo, CAR and Sudan (ICGLR 2005:3). I have therefore decided to define member countries in terms of core countries and concentric circles of more peripheral countries. See appendix for a map of the core of the Great Lakes region (figure 1) and an overview of the member countries of the ICGLR (figure 2). I will focus mainly on the core countries. More specifically, I will emphasize the current state of affairs in the eastern DRC, and the role of Uganda and Rwanda in relation to these conflicts. Insecurity in parts of the DRC, especially in the east of the country, continues to pose a serious threat to political stability in the Great Lakes region as a whole (Dagne 2009:6). Furthermore, as will be discussed later, the role of Rwanda and Uganda in relation to the regionalized war in the DRC has been considerable. In addition, a serious threat to peace and security in the Great Lakes is the continued presence of Ugandan and Rwandan militia groups in the DRC. This illustrates the importance of focusing on the role of actors from these countries in relation to the transnational Great Lakes conflicts; both on the level of formal interstate politics, informal groups affecting the conflict dynamic and the intertwining of these different actors.

### **1.4 The thesis in outline**

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework. Within the literature on “New Regionalism”, the state is considered as only one of several actors in international and intra-regional relations. Multiplicities of non-state actors at the informal levels are recognized as key players and drivers in the regionalization process (Francis 2006:119). The emphasis on both state and non-state actors makes it relevant to apply theories of new regionalism in an analysis discussing transnational conflict. However, I will not go deeply into the different perspectives of and debates on new regionalism.<sup>5</sup> Instead, I will focus on the aspects of most relevance for my analysis. An important point of departure for my theoretical basis is how transnational conflicts are intractably linked to the functioning of the African state. This linkage leads to a particular type of “trans-state regionalization”. In addition, I will provide a theoretical discussion of how

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<sup>5</sup> There exists a wide spectrum of perspectives on new regionalism. For an overview, see Söderbaum and Shaw (2003) and Grant and Söderbaum (2003a).

the Great Lakes region can be viewed as a relevant unit for analysis concerning security issues.

Chapter 3 presents an empirical background to the conflicts in the Great Lakes and the development of the AU, while chapter 4 presents the methodology and design of research. In this thesis, theory is applied descriptively through explaining the characteristics of the Great Lakes conflicts. However, I use these observations to evaluate whether an interstate organization can develop relevant responses to such a reality. Thus, my analysis will be partly descriptive (positive) and partly prescriptive (normative). This will, among other things, be more thoroughly elaborated on in chapter 4.

Chapter 5 examines the AU's security politics in the Great Lakes region, and analyzes whether the organization can contribute to conflict management. An important aim will be to answer my first sub-question. Chapter 6 examines the AU's conflict management efforts in cooperation with sub-regional initiatives. The main aim is to answer my second sub-question. This chapter will also further contextualize the AU's security politics, and will therefore include the role of external actors, mainly the UN.

Finally, chapter 7 will contain the conclusion. I will conclude that the AU, as an interstate organization, fails to address many aspects of transnational conflict. The organization has developed a legal and normative framework suited to address different security notions. Despite this fact, however, it is difficult for the AU to contribute to the management of transnational conflict when it does not address the way in which state actors are intertwined in political networks with non-state actors. Furthermore, it is necessary with a security approach aimed at the Great Lakes *as such*. The ICGLR is a promising initiative in this regard. However, a *regional* approach does not necessarily remove the challenges related to interstate management of *transnational* conflict; The Union's politics is to a large extent determined by state actors who see opportunities in conflict that they would never have in peace.

## 2.0 Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Introduction

New regionalism consists of a plurality of theoretical approaches. One single theory cannot give a sufficient picture of the multiplicity of new regionalism. It exist a variety of partly overlapping and partly competing perspectives and theories (Söderbaum 2003:1-3). The concepts applied in this thesis are those I find most suited to explain the characteristics of the regional Great Lakes conflicts. First of all, the concept of *transnationalism* can be seen as an integral part of new regionalism, given the focus on both state and non-state actors. Furthermore, in order to understand the way conflict cross borders it is important to elaborate on the functioning of the African state. In this thesis, the state will be explained by focusing on *neopatrimonialism*. African states operate in a field between a legal and bureaucratic/rational framework and a person-based framework. The formal division between a person and his office seldom exists (Dokken 2008:25). An important feature of the neopatrimonial state is the lack of institutionalization, which creates transnational relations (ibid:36). It is therefore relevant to explain the African state by referring to neopatrimonialism in an analysis that focuses on transnational conflict. In addition, one can argue that transnationalism and neopatrimonial states create a particular type of regionalization. Daniel C. Bach emphasizes that new regionalism in Africa is being manifested through processes of *trans-state regionalization*. This phenomenon combines transnational and interstate interactions, which evolve through an exploitation of the opportunities created by porous borders. Trans-state regionalization is both a response to and an expression of failing and dysfunctional states (Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:13).

Furthermore, theory of “Regional Security Complexes” (RSCs) will be explained to illustrate how the Great Lakes region can viewed as a relevant unit for analysis concerning security issues. Empirically and theoretically, the characteristics of security in Africa are very different from what we find in the Western world. As mentioned in



chapter 1, almost all African conflicts cross international borders and have consequences beyond the state of origin (Dokken 2008:17-18). I therefore find it useful to combine different theoretical concepts (within the field of new regionalism) in order to achieve a high degree of explanatory power when addressing the complex transnational and regional aspects of the Great Lakes conflicts.

First, however, it is necessary with an explanation of relevant terms. For instance, the term “new regionalism” requires an explanation of two words, both “new” and “regionalism”.

## **2.2 Region, regionalism and regionalization**

### ***2.2.1 Region***

Often, especially in political science and economics, regions are taken as given. They are believed to exist “out there”, identifiable through material structures and interstate frameworks (Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:5). However, the view presented by new regionalism analysts is that regions are not in any way given, they are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed in the process of regional and global transformations (Francis 2006:118). Both state and non-state actors participate in the process of constructing the region and giving it a special content (Bøås 2003:34).

There has been much debate within research about how best to define a region. Many theorists agree with the minimum definition of a region set out by Joseph Nye: “[...] a limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence” (Nye 1968:vii, Schulz et al 2001:14-15).

Although the point of departure for the understanding of a region can be geographical proximity, this is not unproblematic. Different actors can for instance have dissimilar definitions of what constitute the border of a region (Bøås 2003:34). The elaboration in section 1.3.6 about what constitutes the Great Lakes region is an illustration of this. In many instances the geographical region and the core of the region is defined differently. Thus, when speaking of “regionalized conflicts” in the Great Lakes, this

means the spread of conflict across national borders; although it is not always clear where the region starts and where it ends. The perception of what constitutes the border of the region can also change, as the conflict can spread even further and include more countries. Still, the states of the Great Lakes region are surely linked by a geographical relationship within the African continent. When addressing Nye's other criteria, that of mutual interdependence, it is useful to relate this to the concept of RSCs, as a RSC presupposes a high degree of interdependence between the units involved. This will be elaborated thoroughly later in this chapter.

In International Relations (IR) theories, the macro-region has been the most common object of analysis (Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:5-6). Africa is often conceptualized as a region in relation to other continental regions of the world such as Europe, Asia and Latin America. This macro-regional conception of Africa means that there also exists several sub-systems and micro-regions (Francis 2006:117-18). If the AU is a macro-regional grouping, then for instance Southern Africa is a sub-region. However, Southern Africa is most frequently considered a macro-regional space in its own right. The concept of sub-regions only makes sense when related to larger macro-regions (Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:6). This illustrates how the concept of a region is constructed, and whether a unit is viewed as a macro-region or a sub-region is defined by what it is analyzed in relation to. Therefore, the Great Lakes can be viewed as a sub-region when related to the macro-regional grouping of the AU. Macro-regions, sub-regions and micro-regions are related and intertwined to an increasing extent, together constituting parts of the larger process of regionalization (ibid).

### ***2.2.2 Regionalism and regionalization***

Just as there are different understandings of what constitutes a region, there are also many contrasting definitions of regionalism and regionalization (Söderbaum 2003:7). Often the distinction is not made at all, although they represent different meanings (Schultz et al 2001:5). Within the field of new regionalism theories, regionalism is often viewed as representing the body of ideas, the concrete objectives behind the regional cooperation (Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:7, see also Schultz et al 2001:5).

This means that the AU, as the leading political body in Africa, is expected to have a clear regional program, with goal and aims for cooperation within the African continent.

Regionalization refers to creating a regional system or network in a specific geographical area or regional social space. Regionalization illustrates the actual (empirical) process taking place. Regionalization may be caused by regionalism, but it may also occur regardless of the presence of a regionalist ideology (Hveem 2003:83-84, Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:7). The AU's actual moves towards increased cooperation in Africa can in this sense constitute a formal regionalization process, for instance the implementation of strategies aimed at cooperation within different regions of the continent. However, informal regional interaction also shape the regionalization processes. Regionalization can grow irrespective of state policies and even at times in opposition to their stated purpose (Bach 2003:22).

Gamble and Payne have defined regionalism as “[...] a state-led or states-led project designed to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines” (cited in Schulz et al 2001:5). However, several scholars disagree that regionalism necessarily is a states-led project. For instance Bøås, Marchand and Shaw (2003:201) argue that regionalism is clearly a political project, but states are not the only political actors around. Within each regional project, formal or not, several competing actors with different visions and ideas coexist. However, according to Bach (2003:25), the distinction between regionalism as a state-centered project and regionalization as a process or an outcome is essential if one is to focus analysis beyond the politics of summitry. I will therefore take as the point of departure that the AU represents *regionalism* as a state-led organization, while the *regionalization* processes in the Great Lakes is characterized by a multitude of both state and non-state actors shaping the conflict dynamic in the region. The views and perceptions of these actors will in most circumstances not coalesce. As I will argue throughout this thesis, the regionalization processes in the Great lakes will in many instances work to counteract the formal states-led projects.

## 2.3 New regionalism

Regionalism is predominantly a post-second World War phenomenon. During the 1950s and 1960s, regionalism was seen as an important strategy for achieving security, peace and development, particularly in Europe. However, the interest and enthusiasm for regional integration faded out in the late 1960s and early 1970s because the grandiose projects had limited impact or simply never materialized. The “return” of regionalism is an important trend in contemporary IR. This wave is often referred to as the “new regionalism”.<sup>6</sup> The point of departure is that regionalism the last couple of decades has been reasserting its importance in IR, after a period of almost complete neglect (Schulz et al 2001:1-3).

In order to understand regionalism today it is essential to realize that we are dealing with a qualitatively new phenomenon. The new regionalism refers to a phenomenon, still in the making, that began to emerge in the mid-1980s. The “old regionalism” must be placed within a particular historical context, dominated by the bipolar Cold War structure, with nation-states as the primary actors. The new wave of regionalism, however, needs to be related to the current transformation of the world (ibid:3). The concept of new regionalism encompasses state-led, formal regionalist initiatives. It also includes non-state relations of for instance markets, peoples, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other types of social networks and movements (MacLean 2003:112).

Sub-Saharan Africa has always been a challenge for IR theory (Buzan and Wæver 2003:219). Most theories on IR are based on the political experiences of the Western world. This indicates that one of the most important problems related to applying theories developed on the basis of European or American experience to the study of

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<sup>6</sup> It is sometimes made a distinction between “mainstream” and critical scholars within the field of new regionalism. In general, new regionalism is seen as a theory-building strategy where the prefix “new” is used in order to distinguish theoretical novelties from previous frameworks. However, within the field there is a school espoused by scholars of critical and non-orthodox IR called the “new regionalisms approach” (NRA) (Grant and Söderbaum 2003b:3). The NRA aims to avoid state-centrism and focus on both state and non-state actors (Schulz et al 2001:13). Thus, several of the theoretical concepts introduced here can be localized within the school of NRA. However, although important to note, I will not discuss the distinction between “mainstream” theories and the NRA further in this thesis.

African politics is the unit for analysis. In Africa, the state is organized in a very different manner from what these theories postulate. The African state is not a rational, unitary actor. Instead there is a large variety of state and non-state actors with different interests who interact in the national and international arenas of the African continent (Dokken 2008:23-24). Within the literature on new regionalism, the state is considered only one of several actors in international and intra-regional relations. Multiplicities of non-state and sub-national actors at the informal levels are recognized as key players and drivers in the regionalization process (Francis 2006:119).

### ***2.3.1 Transnationalism***

The concept of transnationalism is closely related to processes of regionalism and regionalization. This is why transnationalism is such a relevant concept when studying phenomena such as regional organizations and regionalized conflicts in Africa. While regionalism and regionalization refers to the processes of increased interaction and cooperation within different regions, transnationalism shows how these processes are influenced by an intertwining of both state and non-state actors. More specifically, transnationalism can be seen as a part of new regionalism, because of the focus on different types of actors and interactions, both formal and informal.

Different definitions of transnationalism are used in the literature. Keohane and Nye (1972:xi) defines it as “[...] contacts, coalitions and interactions, across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments”. However, this definition only says that transnationalism is interaction across national boundaries that are not formally controlled (Dokken 2008:47). The definition of Risse-Kappen (see section 1.1) is more useful for the purpose of this thesis. This definition considers the state as one of the most important actors in transnationalism<sup>7</sup>. This is highly relevant in relation to African politics and the African state system. The extent to which transnational actors gain access to the political

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<sup>7</sup> To illustrate the existence of a plurality of definitions on transnationalism, it is relevant to mention that some scholars define it to include only non-state actors. For instance Bøås (2003:34) defines transnationalism as “[...] interaction across national borders by and between non-state actors.” However, in this thesis I will argue that a definition that includes the interactions between both state and non-state actors is useful when addressing the Great Lakes conflicts.

system is primarily related to the state structure (Risse-Kappen 1995:24-25). There is a relationship between state fragmentation and increased transnationalism. Many African states can be considered “weak”. Weak states have fragmented political institutions, weak social structures, and a low degree of social mobility. To be able to influence the politics of a country, transnational actors must overcome two different hindrances. First, they must gain access to the political system of the actual state. Second, they must contribute to or generate a winning policy-coalition to be able to influence the politics the way they wish. Weak states have few means to limit transnational actors’ access to its political system (such as visas or export licenses). If the political institutions are fragmented to the extent that it is impossible to cooperate with them, the existence of an informal sector is highly possible. The weakness of the state facilitates the growth of informal networks, and these networks are by nature transnational (Dokken 2008:47-48). The concept of neopatrimonialism can help explain the relationship between transnationalism and the weakness of the African state.

### ***2.3.2 The relationship between transnationalism and neopatrimonialism***

In a broad historical perspective, the nation-state emerged out of dramatic processes of social change that incorporated empires, city-states, tribes and feudal lords. The idea of the nation-state as the sovereign authority over a given area is usually tied to the peace agreement in Westphalia in 1648. In the modern Westphalian state, it is assumed that the state governs autonomously, that it controls an economic resource base, and that it has the capability to defend itself. It is also assumed that the state has monopoly on violence. However, the military apparatus is to be directed towards external threats and not to internal ones (Bøås 2003:32).

The abovementioned model of political organization has been dominant in the twentieth century. However, there has also emerged another type of state, namely the post-colonial state. This type of state often does not fit the criteria that characterize the Westphalian state. Jean-Francois Médard (1996) has described the post-colonial state as neopatrimonial. This is a mixed type of rule, characterized by confusion between

the private and the public sector (Mèdard 1996:80). Neopatrimonialism is derived from the concept of patrimonial authority, which Max Weber used to describe the principle of authority in small and traditional polities.<sup>8</sup> In patrimonial political systems, an individual rules on the basis of his own personal prestige and power. Ordinary people are treated as extensions of the ruler's household, with no rights or privileges other than those given to them by the ruler. Authority is personalized, formed by the preferences of the ruler rather than by a system of laws. Weber distinguished patrimonial authority from rational-legal authority, where the public sphere is separated from private sphere, and written laws and bureaucratic institutions guide the exercise of authority (Dokken 2008:35).

The neopatrimonial state is a mix between the two types of authority mentioned above. Even the smallest and poorest of the African states have bureaucratic institutions, but the patrimonial type of authority continues to function within the state institutions (ibid). Power is personally exercised, and because there is an overlap between private and public spheres, the public offices are turned into the private property of the higher-ranking employees. People working for the state use their position to accumulate wealth. Politics become a kind of business with three main currencies: force, money and connections (ibid, Mèdard 1996:87). Another feature of the neopatrimonial state is the lack of institutionalization (Mèdard 1996:86). For instance there is no institutionalized separation between state and society. In African states, informal politics are often performed within the framework of formal institutions (Eriksen 2004a:504).

The situation in many African states is that large sectors of the population and sometimes the entire state apparatus owe their survival to semi-official - and often illegal - flows of trade, capital and services that cross national borders (Bøås 2003:36). This shows the general connection between the neopatrimonial state and transnationalism. When the state apparatus does not function properly, it leads the way for transnational activity. For instance, the weakness of state institutions in the DRC,

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<sup>8</sup> For a thorough introduction to patrimonialism, see Weber, Max (1958).

including the lack of border control, has facilitated transnational trade networks and war economies (Rubin et al 2001:3). In other words, the neopatrimonial state is characterized by a weak state (weak institutions and a lack of state control) and a strong regime (an authoritarian elite who possesses wealth) (Dokken 2008:36). This shows how the state is an important feature when addressing transnational relations. The strong regimes make political opposition impossible, and will most likely generate informal, transnational relations. At the same time the weakness of the state paves the way for increased interaction across borders (ibid:46-7).

### ***2.3.3 Trans-state regionalization***

Neopatrimonialism and transnationalism are brought together in the concept of trans-state regionalization, which was introduced to describe the particular kind of regionalization that exists in Africa. The term refers to processes of cross-border interaction that combine elements of interstate and transnational interaction (Dokken 2010:342-3).

In Africa, regionalization is powerfully shaped by the strategies of state and non-state agents. Regionalization can also build up through patterns of interaction which challenge state territorial control and regional policies alike due to the pervasive influence of trans-state networks (Bach 2003:23). These trans-state networks

“[...] instill and stimulate specific patterns of regionalization whereby the dynamics of networking usually associated with trans-national interactions coalesce with a capacity to instrumentalize interstate relations and state policies through the treatment of public office as opportunities for private interactions” (ibid).

These networks thrive from the capacity to take advantage of opportunities created by the porosity of borders, weak territorial control and the spread of insecurity and violence, which are powerfully enhanced by the conversion of corporate and public functions into private sources of gain by those in control of or endowed with authority (ibid:26).

Bach (1999:8) writes that trans-state regionalization cannot be associated with an institutionalized process, although it is totally dependent on state politics and owes its



prosperity to the involvement of state agents. As will be shown in thesis, in the Great Lakes one often sees a type of trans-state networks where governments are entangled in complex networks with informal actors in other countries. This interaction is not institutionalized. In other words, it illustrates how the regionalization is dependent on the involvement of state actors. Thus, the concept illustrates how neopatrimonial regimes pave the way for transnational activity, and together these processes create a particular type of regionalization, that is; trans-state regionalization.

## **2.4 Regional Security Complexes**

Transnationalism, in Risse-Kappens definition, is about regular interactions across national boundaries. However, it is not about interdependence, which can be defined as pattern of interactions which are mutually costly to disrupt or break (Risse-Kappen 1995:8). That is why theory of RSCs is a useful contribution in order to understand the Great Lakes as a relevant unit for analysis concerning security issues. The term “Great Lakes” was originally a geographical expression encompassing a number of freshwater lakes in East and Central Africa and the countries surrounding them. However, the geographical proximity also shape and delimit a territorial space for interdependence concerning security issues in the region (Khadiagala 2006:1).

The concept of RSCs was introduced by Barry Buzan in 1991, defined as: “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national security concerns cannot realistically be considered apart from one another” (Buzan 1991:190). According to Buzan, security is relational, and one cannot understand the national security of any given state without understanding the regional pattern of security in which it is embedded (Francis 2006:102). His argument is that RSC theory enables one to understand how security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes.

In 1998, Buzan and Ole Wæver redefined the concept. In the new definition, the word “states” was replaced with “units”, which is especially relevant for my purpose. The new definition of a security complex is: “a set of units whose major processes of

securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan and Wæver 2003:44, Dokken 2008:74). This is an acknowledgement of the fact that states are no longer regarded as the sole important actor when analyses of security are concerned. Other important actors are organizations, groups and individuals (Dokken 2008:74).

The idea of a security complex links Buzan’s notion of security to new regionalism (Dunn and Hentz 2003:179). He challenges conventional state-centric approaches by arguing that they underplay the importance of the regional level in IR (Söderbaum 2002:18). RSC theory posits the existence of regional sub-systems as objects of security analysis. The essential logic is rooted in the fact that all the states in the system are enmeshed in a global web of security interdependence. But because most political and military threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, insecurity is often associated with proximity (Buzan 2003:141). At this point it is useful to mention Nye’s definition of a region. The element of geographical proximity has already been debated earlier in this chapter, and regarding this, it is interesting to point out how Buzan relate insecurity to there being a geographical relationship between the units concerned. In addition, a RSC depends on there being significant levels of security interdependence among a group of states or other actors. Security interdependence requires substantial interaction among the units concerned (Buzan and Wæver 2003:229). Again, one can link this up to Nye’s definition of a region, where the other criteria is “a degree of mutual interdependence”. A RSC require a significant level of security interdependence. This shows that Nye’s definition of a region is relevant for my thesis.

### ***2.4.1 Debating the concept of a Regional Security Complex***

It must be pointed out that Buzan and Wæver (2003:219) admits that sub-Saharan Africa poses challenges for RSC theory because of the weakness of the state. A region is not an RSC if the states within it do not consider each other their main security concern, or if their capabilities are too weak to project threats beyond their boundaries (Ulriksen 2010:358). However, a region is a security complex if the security of each

state has to be studied as part of the whole, and where regional solutions have to be found to secure peace (ibid). As I will argue throughout this thesis, the conflicts in the Great Lakes are interconnected to the extent that a regional solution to them is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, Buzan and Wæver (2003:245-46) argue that there are increasing grounds for seeing the Great Lakes as a RSC, based around a core comprising of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC.

In Africa, informal transnational actors may possess just as much power as formal state actors. It is therefore of utmost importance that these are recognized as equally important as the state actors in relation to the overall security picture (Dokken 2008:75). However, Dokken (2008:75) argues that RSC theory underestimates the importance of transnational actors. It views transnational actors only as sub-state or non-state actors, and by doing that they give them too little importance in relation to regional security interdependence. Furthermore, Dunn and Hentz (2003:180) argue that the concept is essentially statist and ignores “whose security” is being pursued<sup>9</sup>. The definition of transnationalism used in this thesis is one that includes both state and non-state actors. This underlines how the concepts of transnationalism (in Risse-Kappens definition) and trans-state regionalization are the most important when illustrating how both state and non-state actors are important for the sustenance of a regional conflict dynamic. However, RSC theory is an important supplement, as it underscores the relevance of viewing the Great Lakes as a unit for analysis concerning security issues.

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<sup>9</sup> This criticism will be mentioned in chapter 6, when analyzing the Great Lakes in relation to RSC theory.

## 3.0 Empirical background

### 3.1 Introduction

According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002:215), no region in Africa has been subject to as much political strife, loss of life and social dislocation during the last decades as the Great Lakes region. Only from the early 1990s onwards, it has been the theater of a series of events that has profoundly disrupted the stability in the region. This include the beginning of civil war in Rwanda in 1990 and genocide of 1994, with its hundreds of thousands of victims and multitude of refugees; the massacres which followed the assassination of the president in Burundi in 1993 and the following civil war; the two Congo wars leading to the fall of president Mobutu and the fragmentation of the DRC; the remaining conflict in Northern Uganda (Banégas 2008:1). The examples are many, but because of the limitations of this thesis, it is not possible to give a thorough explanation and overview of the region's history of war and conflict. When presenting the background to the state of affairs in the Great Lakes, I will focus solely on the incidents that are most relevant for understanding the current transnational conflict dynamic.

The most salient variables of the historical background to the conflicts in the Great Lakes are the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and Mobutu's fall from power in the DRC in 1997, and the impact these events had on the region as a whole (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:215). In addition, the DRC, especially the eastern parts, can be seen as the epicenter of what has developed into a regional conflict, and the two Congo wars must therefore be elaborated on (Juma 2007:3). When presenting this, I will use examples to show the transnational aspects of the Great Lakes conflicts, and also how the functioning of the state has contributed to the spread of these conflicts. The conflicts have on one hand been state-led, but at the same time non-state actors have had a large impact on the conflict dynamic. In connection to this, I will illustrate the trans-state

regionalization processes in the Great Lakes by elaborating on the complex networks of actors present in the DRC today.

When presenting the background to my analysis, an overview of the development of the AU is also required. However, the AU has 53 member countries and consists of 17 institutions. It is impossible to present this within the scope of my thesis, and I will therefore focus mainly on the development of the OAU/AU's peace and security politics. In other words, this chapter has two aims; first, the conflicts in the Great Lakes will be presented and contextualized. Second, I will give an overview of the OAU/AU, with a particular focus on the later year's development of the Union in areas concerning peace and security. In addition, I will give a short introduction to the establishment of the International Conference on the Great Lakes region (ICGLR).

## **3.2 The conflicts in the Great Lakes**

### ***3.2.1 The Rwandan genocide and its consequences***

During the spring of 1994, the Rwandan government organized the 20th century's most rapid extermination campaign. In about 100 days, at least half a million civilians were killed.<sup>10</sup> The primary targets were members of the minority Tutsi population, but majority Hutus who strongly opposed the ruling party or who openly refused to participate in the genocide were also killed (Straus 2008:169). The genocide was spearheaded by elements of the Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR), the national army, and the extremist Hutu militia known as the Interahamwe (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:223). The genocide led to the massive outflow of Hutu refugees to all the countries in the region (Mills and Norton 2002:1). Furthermore, since 1994 the ex-FAR and Interahamwe militia have been given a safe haven in eastern DRC (Dagne 2009:3). They have used Congolese territory to reorganize, re-equip, train and recruit new members, and launched attacks into Rwanda (Curtis 2005:2).

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<sup>10</sup> Estimates for the total number killed in the genocide vary from 500,000 to more than a million (Straus 2008:169).

There have been many attempts at trying to understand why the genocide in Rwanda could occur. Some have emphasized the steady deterioration of the economic situation and growing inequalities in the country, while others have insisted on the untenable demographic pressure and scarcity of land. Others again have highlighted the impact of ethnic differences (Reyntjens 2006:15). Explanations are many, and it is obvious that the genocide could take place due to a number of different factors, including those mentioned above. However, when relating it to the purpose of this thesis, the most relevant factor is how the genocide contributed to the regionalization of violent conflict in the Great Lakes. To explain this, it is necessary to elaborate on other crucial events in the region, namely the wars in the DRC.

### ***3.2.2 The two Congo wars***

Mobutu Sese Seko was in power in what was then called Zaire from 1965-1997. The corrupt neopatrimonial regime (see section 2.3.2) of president Mobutu privatized the state governing institutions to serve his political, economic and strategic self-interests (Francis 2006:196). This system was successful in the way that it kept him in power for over 30 years. Eventually, however, it undermined Mobutu's own position, and also the social, economic and cultural stability in the Great Lakes and Central African regions (Bøås and Dokken 2002:153).

In 1996, rebel insurgents led by Laurent Kabila of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) challenged the dictatorship of President Mobutu. This insurgence is often called the first Congo war. For a variety of security-political and strategic reasons, Kabila's ADFL was supported and armed by both Rwanda and Uganda. By 1997, the authoritarian regime of President Mobutu was overthrown by Kabila, who made himself president and changed the name of the country to the Democratic Republic of Congo (Francis 2006:196). Kabilas seizure of power did not just mean the end of the Mobutu regime, but it also led to the collapse of the Congolese state (Eriksen 2004b:554). Three decades of Mobutu's misrule had made Zaire such a weak state that the government no longer managed to control its own territory (Ulriksen 2004:522).

Within a year, the alliance between president Kabila and his allies, i.e. Rwanda and Uganda, had broken down. Uganda and Rwanda turned against Kabila, alleging that Kabila encouraged the Interahamwe and other dissidents to attack Rwanda and Uganda (Francis 2006:196). In 1998, a new civil war broke out, what has been called the second Congo war. Different rebel groups were now supported by Rwanda and Uganda, in an attempt to overthrow the Kabila regime (Eriksen 2004b:555).

From 1998 to 2003, the DRC got enmeshed in Africa's most devastating and large-scale war, at one point pitting the armies of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi together with Congolese rebel groups against the government of the DRC supported by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia (Nowrojee 2004:55). Also a number of non-Congolese guerilla groups operating from bases in the DRC participated in the battles, and in addition at least five Congolese armed movements and a large number of militias. Three other states were directly affected by the war, and several other states were indirectly impinged by its consequences (Ulriksen 2004:517).

In 1999, the Lusaka ceasefire agreement was signed by the leaders of Uganda, Rwanda, the DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. Nonetheless, both sides to the conflict consistently violated the ceasefire agreement (Dagne 2009:4). In 2002, a landmark agreement between Rwanda and the DRC was reached which contributed to the concurrent withdrawal of Rwandan troops. Similar agreements were reached for the withdrawal of Ugandan, Angolan, Namibian and Zimbabwean troops. The DRC had demanded that internal political reconstruction could not begin until foreign troops had withdrawn from its territory, and Congolese parties now made efforts to set up an administration and begin the transition. In April 2003, President Joseph Kabila<sup>11</sup> took the oath of office as head of the transitional government (Baregu 2006:68-69).

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<sup>11</sup> Laurent Kabila was murdered in 2001, and his son Joseph took over as president.

### **3.2.3 The Great Lakes and transnationalism**

As written in section 2.3, new regionalism theories move beyond state-centrism. This is important to keep in mind when elaborating on the conflicts in the Great Lakes. The point is not to ignore the state, however, the state (dys)functions in such a way that the conflicts spread across national borders and include different types of actors. The way the state is constructed can contribute to our understanding of the conflicts.

The role of Rwanda in relation to the wars in the DRC is considerable. Rwanda's activities in the DRC have been in the backdrop of the 1994 genocide. From their bases in eastern Congo, the ex-FAR and Interahamwe often launched attacks on their home country. This led the Rwandan army to invade the DRC after some time, claiming this was necessary in order to secure its own border. Further, militarized refugees also came from the other countries of the region, for instance Uganda. Rebellions of various kinds fled from repressive regimes in their home countries and sought shelter in eastern Congo. Some of these groups joined in on behalf of the ruling regime in the DRC, while others joined Congolese rebellion groups in order to overthrow the regime (Dokken 2008:66-67).

Throughout the war in the DRC, the presence of such militarized refugees has been one of the most important factors for the continuance of violent conflict. They often get entangled in complex networks of illegal trade and smuggling, and in that way become wealthier than they would in their home countries. This makes it tempting to continue this way of life (ibid:67). This shows the link between the functioning of the state and the spread of conflict. People flee from repressive regimes, and at the same time the DRC has been such a weak state and the borders porous to such an extent that the influx of refugees cannot be controlled. However, this does not mean that a weak state in this context is always a precursor for conflict. Rather it is probably a reciprocal relationship; The weakening of the state is both a predecessor of conflict and a result thereof (ibid:12). This makes it a complex relationship where transnational activity increases both as a result of conflict and is also something that increases it. For



instance, the spread of refugees from Rwanda to the DRC was a result of the Rwandan genocide, but also increased conflict between the two countries.

#### ***3.2.4 The current situation of trans-state regionalization***

The armies of Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe were present in the DRC during most of the war. When they, according to peace agreements, had to officially withdraw, their governments found ways to secure their continued presence in the DRC, as this was of too high an economic importance to neglect. The DRC has an enormous amount of natural resources, and they saw the opportunity to control economic resources in the region. An important type of transnational actor in the DRC is crime networks of drug traffickers, arms merchants, and money launderers. These actors have made agreements with governmental actors as well as warlords to plunder the DRC's natural resources (Dokken 2008:65, 67). The role that state armies previously played in ensuring access to and control of valuable resources has gradually been supplemented by local militias, local politicians, and businessmen. Together, these actors form elite networks that have control over a range of commercial activities to generate revenue in different areas of the DRC. These networks benefit from the instability in the DRC (ibid:72-73).

In addition, Rwanda and Uganda have been accused of continuing a proxy war, supporting rebel groups, especially in the Kivu provinces in the eastern DRC (Baregu 2006:69-70). This illustrates how the conflicts in the Great Lakes today are characterized by trans-state regionalization processes. As written in section 2.3.3, trans-state networks exploit the opportunities created by the porous borders. The examples elaborated on above illustrate the way state and non-state actors are entangled in complex networks, taking advantage the weak territorial control of the Congolese state. Thus, the trans-state regionalization processes are dependent on the state, but at the same time functions outside formal interstate politics.

#### ***3.2.5 Insecurity in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo***

The eastern DRC has been in a state of chaos for over a decade. The first rebellion to oust Mobutu began in the city of Goma in the mid-1990s. The second rebellion in the

late 1990s also started in the eastern parts of the country. Currently over a dozen militia and extremist groups are present (Bøås 2009:5, Dagne 2009). An important source of the chaos in the eastern parts is the influx of over a million Hutus from Rwanda after the genocide, which included parts of the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe (Lemarchand 2006:41). In 2000, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) was founded, bringing together remaining ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces in eastern Congo with other militarized Hutu refugees (Curtis 2005:12). The FDLR is thus not only an armed militia, but its activities can to a large extent be related to the grievances of the Rwandan Hutus having to flee the country after the genocide (Young 2006:316).

During the second Congo war, Rwanda attained a number of victories against ex-FAR and Interahamwe/FDLR, which contributed to reducing the threat emanating from their bases in the DRC (Curtis 2005:7). Since 2004 the FDLR has not carried out any large military attacks on Congolese soil, suggesting that it currently find Kigali's armed force too much of a match to confront it (Bøås 2009:12). Nonetheless, while the FDLR no longer poses a serious threat to Rwanda, it still constitutes a clear danger to the civilian population in parts of the eastern DRC (Lemarchand 2006:52). In general, one of the key sources of conflict is the continuing presence of different rebel groups. For instance, a serious threat to the stability in the Great Lakes relates to the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel group which allegedly is guided by the ten commandments of the Christian Bible. It claims to be on a mission to cleanse the Acholi ethnic group, which is largely resident in the northern districts of Uganda. The militia deploys biblical references to explain why it is necessary to target and abduct the Acholi. In this regard, the Acholi was the first victims of the LRA's machinations (ISS 2010:2-3). However, the LRA has the later years regionalized its sphere of activity, and has committed atrocities and destabilizing activities in northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, the Central African Republic and the DRC (ibid:2). According to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (2010:2), the presence of the LRA in the north and eastern DRC has generated security-political and humanitarian instability. These examples illustrate how insecurity in the eastern DRC destabilizes

other countries of the region, and that prospects for regional stability in the Great Lakes to a large extent is linked up to the situation in the DRC, especially the eastern parts.

### **3.3 The development of the African Union**

#### ***3.3.1 The Organisation of African Unity***

The history of the AU goes back to the days of the liberation of the African colonies. An idea of post-independent cooperation was combined with a dream of “pan-Africanism”. The underlying idea was the right of the African people to cultural, political, and economic independence. Pan-Africanism served as an instrument for the awakening of African nationalism, and was among the main factors behind the establishment of the OAU in 1963 (Dokken 2008:119-20). The official purpose behind the formation of the OAU was to promote unity and solidarity between the member countries. To achieve this, the OAU Charter was based on the principles of self-determination, respect for political sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states (Bøås and Dokken 2002:80, Francis 2006:23).

The OAU achieved success to some extent in that the organization provided a political platform to dialogue and conduct diplomacy. However, the organization faced numerous challenges and failed to achieve most of its objectives (Francis 2006:24). For instance, its efforts to resolve Africa’s conflicts and security problems were not successful. During its 39 years of existence, the OAU achieved very little in these issue areas. Problems in implementing plans, a lack of enthusiasm, and a rigid framework of principles and norms prevented the OAU’s active involvement in serious security and conflict issues (Dokken 2008:120-21). This created a crisis in confidence in the OAU’s ability to resolve Africa’s conflict and security problems, and seriously undermined the vision of pan-African unity (Francis 2006:24).

### ***3.3.2 The establishment of the AU***

The AU was established for a number of different reasons. In general, the African leaders agreed on a need to revitalize the continental organization to enable it to play a more active role and keep pace with the political, economic and social developments taking place within and outside the continent, in order to eliminate the scourge of conflict in Africa (Kioko 2003:810-11). There were especially three African leaders that were eager to reform and reorganize the continental organization - Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Muhammad Gaddafi of Libya. Mbeki's eagerness to create a new drive for African integration was primarily founded in commercial interests. He found it necessary to improve the image of African states to attract foreign investment. Obasanjo was on the other hand mainly engaged in security-political considerations. It was imperative for him to demand a total restructuring of the pan-African organization in order to improve its ability to deal with issues of security, stability, and development. Gaddafi had sensed that two of the most powerful African leaders had started a process of reforming the OAU, and wanted to be a part of this process (Dokken 2008:122-25). In other words many different views and demands characterized the background to the establishment of the new organization.

The AU is designed to achieve three broad goals. First, it is intended to bring together the sub-regional intergovernmental organizations in Africa in order to achieve continent-wide cooperation among African states. Second, it is intended to create conditions to enable African states to engage in social, economic, and political relations in a way that will make war between them unlikely. Third, it aims at designing an institutional structure that will make it easier for African states to participate in the international markets and in international negotiations related to trade, finance, and dept. To work for these objectives, the AU has established 17 institutions, one of these being the PSC, which was added to the AU in December 2003<sup>12</sup> (ibid:127).

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<sup>12</sup> For more information about the establishment of the PSC and the CADSP, see section 1.3.5.

### ***3.3.3 The security politics of the AU***

OAU's explicit focus on national sovereignty underscores how important the concept of state security was for the organization (Dokken 2008:19). However, this contributed to the fact that the organization never managed to develop a peace and security politics that was well-functioning. The AU, on the other hand, acknowledges that security also involves economic, political, and social aspects. This includes internal threats, the security threats against individuals and their welfare, and threats against countries at the regional level (ibid:2,124). For instance, in the Solemn Declaration of the CADSP, the AU writes:

“Ensuring the common security of Africa involves working on the basis of a definition which encompasses both the traditional, state-centric, notion of the survival of the state and its protection by military means from external aggression, as well as the non-military notion [...]” (AU 2004:article 6).

Such a multidimensional security notion provide a good starting point when responding to crises that cross borders, affect civilians and have regional consequences. The organization has acknowledged its lack of success in the past, and developed a new framework for the response to conflicts on the continent.

According to its Constitutive Act, the AU shall defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its member states (AU 2000:article 3b). However, while reiterating the OAU's principles of noninterference, the Constitutive Act also gives the AU an essential new right and responsibility (Engel and Porto 2009:84). Based on a decision by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act pledges “[...] the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity” (AU 2000). Such an agreement does not exist in, for example, the UN Charter (Bogland et al 2008:20). The decision to incorporate the right of intervention in the AU's Constitutive Act stemmed from concern about the OAU's failure to intervene in order to stop the gross and massive violations witnessed in Africa in the past, such as the genocide in Rwanda and its surrounding events in the Great Lakes region (Kioko 2003:812). When the genocide in Rwanda happened, many in Africa experienced a sense of failure. The OAU did not

have the legal or normative framework to respond to it (Dersso 2010 [interview]). With the establishment of the AU, however, such a legal framework is now in place.

The AU has developed an overall framework that has come to be called the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The central institution within the APSA is the Peace and Security Council (PSC) (Bogland et al 2008:21). The PSC operates at the level of ambassadors, ministers, and heads of State and government (Kioko 2003:817). To facilitate the work of the PSC, the African leaders have equipped it with three main bodies: the Panel of the Wise, a continental early warning system, and a military standby force.

The Panel of the Wise was established to support the PSC, especially in the area of conflict prevention (Dokken 2008:129). According to the PSC protocol, the Panel of the Wise “[...] shall be composed of five highly respected African personalities from various segments of society who have made outstanding contribution to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent” (AU 2002: article 11.2). Knowing that the AU’s effectiveness in relation to conflict prevention will depend very much on the capacity to collect, process and act on information, the African leaders has also equipped the PSC with a continental early warning system (Dokken 2008:130). In order to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts, the continental Early Warning System will collect data on the basis of an appropriate early warning indicators module, and analyze developments within the continent and to recommend the best course of action (ibid, AU 2002:article 12.2a and 4). The third body to facilitate the work of the PSC is the African Standby Force (ASF). The PSC protocol states that the ASF shall engage in peace support mission and interventions in order to enable the PSC to perform its responsibilities. The ASF “[...] shall be composed of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice” (AU 2002: article 13.1).

As written in section 1.3.3, the AU recognizes different RECs that are supposed to be the implementing actors of the all-African strategy on peace and security. The AU recognizes eight regional groupings as building blocks for stronger regional integration<sup>13</sup>, and these are seen as part of the overall security architecture of the Union (ECA/AU 2006:xiii, AU 2002: article 16).

### **3.4 The International Conference on the Great Lakes region (ICGLR)**

The ICGLR was initiated as early as 1995, following the genocide in Rwanda, and picked up momentum after the interstate armed conflict in the DRC (ICGLR 2005:1). In 2004, the Heads of State and governments of the Great Lakes region met in Dar Es-Salaam, Tanzania, under the auspices of the UN and the AU, trying to find solutions to the continuing conflicts and insecurity in the region. The result was the establishment of the ICGLR, an institution with a mandate to create lasting conditions for security, stability, sustainable development and reconstruction (Westerkamp et al 2009:8). The key objective of the ICGLR is to build a regional framework structured around the Pact on Security, Stability and Development, which was adopted by member states in 2006. The programs of action is developed around four themes: Peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional integration, and humanitarian and social issues (Bøås et al 2009:9). The priority projects concerning peace and security include a joint security management of common borders and disarmament and repatriation of armed groups in the eastern DRC (AU 2007a: paragraph 9). The OAU/AU played an important role in the preparatory process of the ICGLR, from the inception of the idea in 1995, to the signing of the Pact in 2006. The AU also has a mandate to be actively involved in the implementation of the Pact (AU 2007a: paragraph 31).

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<sup>13</sup> These are the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

## **4.0 Methodological approach**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on my choice of research design and discuss the methodological choices I have made. I will perform a case study, and will therefore give a short overview of the case study method. Furthermore, I will discuss the relevance of the study I have chosen to conduct, and elaborate on how my analysis will serve both descriptive and prescriptive goals of analysis. In addition, I will discuss the reliability and validity of the analysis, especially related to the qualitative interviews I conducted during my fieldwork in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### **4.2 Case study research**

Yin (2009:15) argues that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The choice of method must be determined by the topic. In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when the investigator has little control over events (ibid). In this thesis, I am performing an empirical inquiry, investigating a phenomenon within its real-life context, and it is therefore relevant to use the case study method.

Gerring (2007:20,37) writes that the case study approach to research is most usefully defined as an intensive study of a single unit or a smaller number of units (the cases), where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of similar units (a population of cases). I study the AU in the Great Lakes in order to get an understanding of the extent to which the organization can contribute to conflict management of transnational conflict. However, when studying one specific region I cannot generalize my findings to other areas. My research question focuses solely on the Great Lakes region, while the AU aims to develop a peace and security politics that encompasses the entire continent. To be able to say something about the AU's conflict



management efforts in general, one will have to study the whole of Africa. Thus, when studying the AU's contribution to conflict management in other parts of the continent, one will have to perform a new analysis and include other context-specific features. For instance, one of the context-specific features of the Great Lakes conflicts is how it manifests through processes of trans-state regionalization. This is prevalent in other parts of Africa as well, but to different degrees. Therefore, I cannot generalize my findings to other regions of Africa, since I perform a single case study, focusing on the AU's contribution to conflict management in one specific region.

#### ***4.2.1 Single, embedded case study***

Yin distinguishes between multiple and single case studies, and between holistic and embedded case studies. The first distinction is a question of how many cases one chooses to analyze, the second indicates whether a case study has more than one unit of analysis. An embedded study means that there are several sub-units that are to be analyzed within the case (Yin 2009:50). I have chosen to perform a single, embedded case study. I analyze the AU, but I look into the Union's cooperation with sub-regional mechanisms as well. In other words, the AU is not studied holistically. Its responses are analyzed in cooperation with sub-regional mechanisms (especially the ICGLR), which can therefore be seen as sub-units within the case. Sub-units can often add significant opportunities for extensive analysis, enhancing the insights into a single case (ibid:52).<sup>14</sup>

The evidence from multiple case studies is often considered more compelling than that of single cases, and the overall study is regarded as being more robust (ibid:53). However, studying the AU's responses to conflict, I will argue that it is useful to study only one case. The Great Lakes conflicts are complex and interrelated to such an extent that to be able to say something useful about them it is necessary to delve deep into them. I have therefore chosen to perform a qualitative study, which gives me the opportunity to focus on complex phenomena and perform an in-depth analysis. One of

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<sup>14</sup> The Great Lakes region is also a unit for analysis in this thesis, but cannot be viewed as a sub-unit within the case in the manner mentioned here. The Great Lakes is a geographical area and is therefore a different type of unit for analysis than the formal institutions I will study.

the virtues of the case study method is the depth of analysis that it offers. To be able to give a thorough analysis and to make the study more coherent I have chosen to mainly focus on the core of the Great Lakes region in my analysis.

### ***4.2.2 Technique for case selection***

According to Arend Lijphart, there are six different types of case studies: atheoretical, interpretative, hypothesis-generating, theory-confirming, theory-infirming and deviant case studies. The first two are selected for analysis because of an interest in the case, while the latter four are selected for the purpose of theory building (Lijphart 1971:691-2). Interpretative case studies are selected for analysis because of an interest in the case rather than interest in the formulation of general theory. However, they do make use of established theoretical propositions (ibid:692). In this thesis, I explain the transnational Great Lakes conflicts by applying different concepts within the theoretical field of new regionalism. Based on this, I analyze whether the AU can contribute to the management of these conflicts. I have chosen to study the AU's conflict management efforts in the Great Lakes because this region is a clear example the transnational, interrelated type of conflict. Therefore, this study can be said to be an interpretative case study. It cannot be said to be theory-testing, since I did not choose the case in order to test the theory; rather I chose the theory to enlighten the case. This does not necessarily contribute to theory development, but can give in-depth information on a particular case (Andersen 2005:68). However, as I will discuss below, although my analysis cannot be said to be theory testing, I will still discuss the relevance of the theoretical concepts I have chosen to apply.

### **4.3 The relevance of the study**

Social science research involves a quest for new theories as well as testing of existing theories. According to Gerring (2007:39-41), case studies enjoy a natural advantage in research of an exploratory nature. One is unlikely to reject a hypothesis, or to consider it definitively proved, on the basis of a single case. However, case studies can be most advantageous in early phases of research where one is allowed to test a multitude of hypotheses in a “rough” way. My study can arguably be viewed as exploratory in different ways. New regionalism is a project “still in the making”, and there exist a lot

of fragmentation and division within the field (Söderbaum 2003:3). Applying the theories to different empirical contexts can help explore and discuss the relevance of the different theoretical concepts. However, given that this is an interpretative case study, my main aim is not theory building, rather it is to analyze empirical observations. However, it is of crucial importance to develop theories with a high degree of explanatory power. In order to do this, one has to critically investigate the theoretical concepts one apply to different analyses, even if the main goal is empirical inquiry.

According to Söderbaum and Tavares (2009:72), the role of African regional organizations in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace building still remains an under researched topic. This is first of all a good argument for why the study I have chosen to conduct is relevant: It is a topic that still needs to be explored in order to get an adequate understanding of it. Furthermore, while the AU has divided Africa into smaller units represented by different RECs, it is also important to study areas that do not have a REC that covers the whole region. The Great Lakes serve as an example of the challenges to conflict management one faces in an area with an extensive amount of interstate organizations involved, and how this leaves the conflict management efforts fragmented.

#### **4.4 Descriptive and prescriptive goals of analysis**

Often in political science one makes a distinction between *ought* and *is*, between normative (prescriptive) and positive (descriptive) analysis. However, one can find theoretical constructions where positive and normative elements exist side by side. There are clear parallels between the logic of normative analysis and analysis of real life phenomena. One and the same theory can therefore serve both normative and positive goals of analysis (Rasch 1987:188, 190).

The method of this study will be partly descriptive and partly prescriptive. When studying whether the AU can contribute to conflict management, I also make assumptions about how the efforts *ought to be*. For instance I argue that conflict

management efforts need to address the regional context in which the Great Lakes conflicts prevail. This includes the specific type of trans-state regionalization processes resulting from transnationalism and neopatrimonial regimes. As follows from this description, I include values in an empirical analysis. It is not room here to discuss how, and to what extent, values should be included in analysis of political phenomena.<sup>15</sup> However, Dokken (1997:32) argues that if insisting on a too clear cut distinction between prescriptive and descriptive analysis, one overlooks the fact that evaluation is a normal feature of political analysis, even in the cases where explanation is the stated objective.

By evaluating whether the AU can contribute to conflict management, I have to a certain extent placed myself within the tradition of normative analysis. However, my arguments regarding how one should respond to the Great Lakes conflicts are based on a theoretical and empirical description of an African reality. Thus, by acknowledging the normative aspects of the study, I still obtain traditional descriptive methodology.

In this thesis, theory is used *descriptively* in the way that it describes how the Great Lakes conflicts can be characterized. However, I use these observations to evaluate whether an interstate organization can provide relevant responses to this reality. In other words, the analysis of whether the AU can contribute to conflict management will be evaluated *in relation to* the theoretically based, descriptive analysis of the processes that influence and shape the conflicts in the Great Lakes.

#### **4.5 Validity and reliability**

There are different tests one can perform in order to investigate the quality of empirical social research. In the following, I will briefly comment on a few of these. One can distinguish between construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin 2009:40).

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<sup>15</sup> The relationship between positivism and normativism has been a subject of substantial debate among political scientists (Dokken 1997:31). See for instance Dokken (1997) and Rasch (1987).

#### **4.5.1 Construct validity**

Construct validity is a matter of establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. Case studies have often been criticized for failing to develop a sufficient operational set of measures, and that “subjective” judgments are used to collect the data. Different tactics are available to increase construct validity, and the one I have chosen here is to triangulate between multiple sources of evidence (ibid:41-42). I have relied to a considerable extent on academic contributions, in addition to the official AU and ICGLR documents available. I have also conducted interviews with key informants both within and outside the AU, in order to evaluate the Union’s contribution to conflict management.

#### **4.5.2 Internal validity**

Internal validity refers to the veracity of causal relationships. Gerring (2007:43-44) distinguishes between causal *effects* (the expected effect on Y of a given change in X across a population of cases) and causal *mechanisms*. The estimate of a causal effect is almost always grounded in cross-case evidence. However, case studies may allow one to peer into the box of causality to locate the intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purported effect, that is, the pathway from X to Y. Therefore, causal arguments depend not only on measuring causal effects, but also on the identification of causal mechanisms (Gerring 2007:45). As mentioned earlier, when evaluating the AU I also make claims about how the organization’s politics ought to be in order to contribute to conflict management. Hence, discussing the conflict dynamic in the Great Lakes and evaluating the AU, I can identify different mechanisms that arguably *will* contribute to conflict management. Throughout this thesis, I will argue that the AU fails to address many aspects of transnational conflict. By doing this, I will also identify which mechanisms that need to be present in order for the Union to contribute to conflict management. Thus, I cannot say anything about causal effects in this thesis. However, I will identify different causal mechanisms that need to be present in order for the Union to contribute to the management of transnational conflict.

### ***4.5.3 External validity***

Case study research is generally weaker with respect to external validity than its cross-case cousin (ibid:43). External validity deals with the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study. Critics typically state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing (Yin 2009:43). The problem of external validity is not that relevant for the study of the AU, as I do not aim to say anything about any other organization. But to some extent, the findings on the cooperative efforts between the AU and regional institutions operating in the Great Lakes (especially the ICGLR) can say something in general about the AU's relationship with other regional organizations in Africa. Some of the challenges met might be identical, though one must include context specific features for every case considered. Still, if my aim was generalizing, I should have investigated the AU's relationship with more than one other regional organization. When it comes to the Union's security politics in the Great Lakes, I cannot generalize my findings to other regions, although one might find similarities in challenges faced.

### ***4.5.4 Reliability***

The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in the study. The objective is to be sure that, if a later investigator followed the exactly same procedures and conducted the same case study over again, the investigator should arrive at the same conclusions. The general way of approaching the reliability problem is to make as many steps as possible as operational as possible (Yin 2009:45). In case studies there is always a challenge to avoid that subjectivity influences the work of the researcher. I have in this thesis tried to increase the reliability by using multiple sources, documenting the choices I have made, and by applying different theoretical concepts in order to get wider perspective on the empirical issues at hand. However, with regards to interviews, there are generally several possible problems connected to validity and reliability. This will be discussed in section 4.7.2.

## 4.6 Data Sources

In order to analyze the AU's contribution to conflict management, I will use several methods of data collection. Triangulation in data collection is one of the advantages with the case study approach, and is often a necessary component when using this approach (ibid:114-15).

The development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in 2002 is perhaps the most important development in the security field in Africa during the past decade. Necessary decision making bodies have been created in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, such as the PSC (Söderbaum and Tavares 2009:71). This made it crucial for me to go on a field trip to Addis Ababa, both to conduct interviews with key informants within the AU working with peace and security issues, but also with scholars working within the field. Being based in Addis Ababa, these scholars gave me relevant information about the AU, as they have access to the organization to a larger extent than other scholars. In addition, when dealing with sources linked to the AU, it is crucial also to interview other key informants than those working within the organization. There is a greater chance that someone closely linked to an organization will express positive views on their policies, and it is therefore important to interview more unbiased, independent scholars.

In general, I will argue that accessing different types of information, both from within and outside the AU, increases my construct validity and leads the way for an in-depth analysis. However, it would have been relevant for me to visit the ICGLR headquarters as well, which is based in Bujumbura, Burundi. Here I would have been able to conduct interviews with people who posit information about the cooperation between the AU and the ICGLR. However, due to lack of resources and a limited timeframe, I have chosen only to visit Addis Ababa. This is where the most important decision making bodies are based, and in addition relevant scholarly institutions such as the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Addis Ababa University.

## **4.7 Case study interviews**

According to Yin (2009:106), interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information. He distinguishes between three types of case study interviews. The first one is in-depth interviews, where you can ask key informants about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about events. The interview may take place over an extended period of time, not just a single sitting. The second type is a focused interview, in which a person is interviewed for a short period of time, for example an hour. In such cases, the interviews may still remain open-ended, but you are more likely to follow a certain set of questions. A third type of interview entails more structured questions, along the lines of a formal survey. Such a survey can produce quantitative data as part of the case study evidence (ibid:107-8). In this case study, the second type of interviews was conducted. What Yin classifies as “focused interviews” was in my case conducted using a semi-structured interview technique with open-ended questions. The interviews were based on a general interview guide, but at the same time open for changes and adjustment, follow-ups and additional questions.

### **4.7.1 Informants**

Key informants are often critical to the success of a case study. Such persons provide the case study investigator with insights into a matter and can also initiate access to corroboratory or contrary sources of evidence (Yin 2009:107). Key informants are people who are well informed on a particular subject. They can be seen as resourceful people who can shed light on a case or phenomenon (Andersen 2006:282). As will be elaborated on below, the chosen respondents can all be said to fall in the category of key informants.

Finding informants proved to be quite challenging, especially when I tried to get in touch with AU officials. At first, I tried to directly contact AU officials working with peace and security related issues. However, in most instances they did not reply to my enquiry. Getting in touch with researchers working at the ISS proved to be more successful, and these could also get me in contact with people working within the AU. Furthermore, people working at the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, Oslo, also helped me to build a contact network in Addis Ababa. In addition, while



some of the informants were attained through contacts, I was often able to get new contacts and in some cases new informants, during the interviews.

I interviewed people who possess key information about the African Union, and also people who have worked specifically towards the Great Lakes. I interviewed ten respondents in total. Of these, five were AU officials. One of these was Dr. Admore Kambudzi, the Head of the PSC secretariat. The four others were staff members of the AU's Peace and Security Department (PSD).<sup>16</sup> I was not allowed to cite the latter four without rendering their comments anonymous. This affects the validity of this research, which will be discussed below. I further interviewed two senior researchers at the ISS, Dr. Solomon Ayele Dersso and Jamila El Abdellaoui. Dersso works especially with the normative and legal aspects of the APSA and edits a monthly report on the PSC (Dersso 2010 [interview]). Abdellaoui<sup>17</sup> is a senior researcher at the ISS conflict prevention programme, and her area of focus has especially been the Great Lakes (Abdellaoui 2010 [interview]). I also interviewed Jean-Luc Ndizeye, Political Affairs Officer at the UN Liaison Office with the African Union. In 2009, he also co-authored a NORAD Report on the ICGLR, reviewing the Norwegian support to the ICGLR Secretariat (see Bøås et al 2009). In addition, I interviewed two people working at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa; Counselor Silje Vikøy<sup>18</sup>, accredited to work towards the AU, and Minister Counselor Rolf Ree.

#### ***4.7.2 Validity and reliability problems in interviewing***

In regards to the interviews, there are several possible problems connected to their reliability and validity. First, it is important that the interviewees' responses are not influenced by the interviewer asking leading questions (Andersen 2006:289). To ensure that this was avoided, I worked on writing open questions that could let the interviewee speak freely without interruptions. Second, it is important that both parties correctly understand the questions and responses during the interview. This can be

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<sup>16</sup> The PSD is a department under the AU Commission. Specific objectives of the PSD include ensuring ratification and operationalization of the PSC Protocol and to coordinate, harmonize and promote the peace and security programs of the RECs (AU 2010a). This means that the PSC and its sub-organs are serviced and supported by the PSD.

<sup>17</sup> Jamila El Abdellaoui is at the time of writing no longer employed at the ISS Addis Ababa Office.

<sup>18</sup> Vikøy is at the time of writing no longer employed at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa.

achieved by ensuring that the questions asked are comprehensible, and to clarify during the interview if there are any misunderstandings (Rubin and Rubin 2005:109). Finally, to ensure documentation, and to prevent misinterpretation of the collected data, one can use a tape recorder. However, it can be preferred to take notes when the material is sensitive, and the interviewee does not feel comfortable being recorded (ibid:109-110). In my case, most interviewees preferred it if I did not use such a recorder. In the AU, I also met restrictions from the organization in recording the interviews. Only two of my interviews were conducted using a tape recorder. The problem with not recording the interviews is of course that the information is less accurate. This problem was however attempted counteracted by taking thorough and detailed notes during the interviews as well as complementing the notes immediately after the interviews were conducted, based on my recollections of the responses. Further, all the interviewees were given the opportunity to review and comment on citations before using the data in my analysis.

In regards to reliability, in some cases this has been difficult to ensure, as the AU staff members I interviewed wished to remain anonymous. This makes it more difficult for other researchers to verify this information. Nevertheless, these informants did provide valuable information which was pertinent to the analysis presented in this thesis. Therefore, I considered the benefits of including these interviews higher than the loss of reliability when not disclosing the names of the informants.

Another important aspect of the reliability of interviews is to be aware of the fact that these are verbal reports only and subject to the common problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation (Yin 2009:108-9). This was particularly relevant in the cases where I interviewed AU staff members. In a few instances they had a more favorable view on their own security politics than the other respondents. It was therefore important to also interview other informants in order to get different views on the AU's politics.

## **5.0 The African Union's security-political initiatives in the Great Lakes region**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will analyze the AU's security politics in the Great Lakes. Some of the efforts that will be discussed are continent-wide, while others are directed specifically towards the Great Lakes conflicts. The first are important to include to the extent to which they affect the AU's politics in the Great Lakes. I will focus on militia groups, ordinary refugees, and the relationships between African warring parties.

Throughout the wars in the DRC, the presence of militarized refugees was an important reason for the continuance of violent conflict (see section 3.2.3). Even today, militant groups represent a constant threat to the regimes from which they flee (Dokken 2008:67). The DRC is host country to a large amount of militias and militarized refugees, some of which has their origin in the DRC, and others which originate from other countries in the region. When addressing transnational conflict, it is therefore relevant to investigate the AU's ways of dealing with rebel groups that can be linked to more than one country in the region.

In addition, an important aim of this chapter will be to answer my first sub-question, namely if the AU is focusing on all the security aspects necessary in order to contribute to the management of transnational conflict. As I will argue throughout this chapter, conflict management efforts must include how state security is connected to non-military security aspects. The AU's security approach will for instance be discussed by elaborating on the Great Lakes refugee crisis. The large occurrence of displaced persons in the Great Lakes will serve as an illustration of the importance of addressing different security notions. The AU has developed a security framework that to a large extent includes different notions of security. However, I will argue that as an interstate organization, the AU in many instances fails to address non-military security

aspects because the neopatrimonial member states do not provide for their own citizens.

I will discuss several of the AU's security-political efforts, both those addressing interstate relations and those addressing informal aspects. Through these discussions, I will identify mechanisms that need to be present for the AU to contribute to conflict management. Further, I will argue that the organization fails to address many important aspects of transnational conflict because the AU's member states have their own interests in the current conflicts. In addition, power asymmetries among the Great Lakes states create a situation where the more powerful countries determine the content of the organization's politics on the detriment of weaker member states. In relation to this discussion, hegemonic stability theory will be shortly introduced.

## **5.2 The AU's approach to transnational rebel groups**

I will focus on the AU's responses to a few of these militias instead of analyzing the Union's politics towards these groups from a general perspective. In order to show the different contexts through which the AU's politics is determined by state actors, it can provide better insight to focus on a few militias rather than trying to pursue the general approach to rebel groups. Examples will be drawn from policies towards the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). It is in general relevant to address these particular militias because they can be linked to more than one country in the region, and can also serve as an illustration of the way the AU's politics is determined by state actors.

### ***5.2.1 The responses towards the FDLR and the LRA***

In order to discuss whether the AU's politics towards these groups can contribute to the management of transnational conflict, it is necessary to elaborate on how these groups *should* be addressed. Jean-Luc Ndizeye (2010 [interview]) asserts that when faced with a conflict situation stake-holders should get involved without undermining the authority of the legitimate leadership. It should therefore be indicated to engage those who have taken up arms. There are many avenues for that; If their grievances are not addressed the problem will not disappear in the long run. "Disarming people

without 'disarming' their mind will only lead to chaos". The military option is rarely the solution, and should only be the last option when all other approaches have been explored but failed to produce any progress (ibid). Given how the FDLR can be related to the grievances of Hutus that to a large extent got the blame after the Rwandan genocide, the militia is tied up to groups not only in the DRC but also in Rwanda (see section 3.2.1 and 3.2.5). It can therefore be argued that disarming the FDLR will not lead to the long-lasting riddance of the transnational threat that it poses. However, the AU's politics towards the FDLR has exactly been one of disarmament.

At a meeting held in January 2005, the PSC stated that the problems posed by the continued presence of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe<sup>19</sup> in Eastern DRC requires a decisive action to effectively disarm and neutralize these groups (AU 2005:paragraph B3). The PSC "[...] urges AU Member States to extend the necessary security assistance, including troops, to contribute to the effective disarmament and neutralization of the armed groups" (ibid). According to a AU Peace and Security Department (PSD) staff member, this was a very "strong decision" that would require a lot of resources that the AU did not have, such as helicopter ambulances and strong command Special Forces (PSD staff member 1 2010 [interview]). However, the PSC statement shows that the AU's view on how to approach the FDLR has been one of disarmament, although it has not had the resources to follow through with any action in this matter. Further, a PSC communiqué on 22 December 2008 also makes reference to how the continued presence of the ex-Far/Interahamwe in the Eastern DRC undermines the stability in the region and strain relations between the DRC and Rwanda. The communiqué further calls for the full implementation of the Nairobi communiqué<sup>20</sup>, including the plan for the disarmament of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe (AU 2008a:paragraph 4, 14).

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<sup>19</sup> In most instances, the AU refers to the FDLR as ex-FAR/Interahamwe, being that it consists of members of the latter groups. I will therefore use these terms when referring directly to AU documents. In any other instances, I will refer to the FDLR.

<sup>20</sup> The Nairobi Communiqué is a common approach between Rwanda and the DRC aimed at finding a lasting and concerted solution to the threat posed by the continued presence in the east of the DRC of illegal arms groups. This will be elaborated on in section 5.5.2.

In the case of the LRA, the AU's approach has been more differentiated. The LRA has the later years regionalized its sphere of activity (see section 3.2.5). According to the ISS (2010:3), it now has to be addressed through an integrated regional and continental approach. The inability of the national security forces in which the LRA is operational to coordinate their response to the militia, allows it to continue conducting its operations across the porous borders (ibid). The need for a regional approach when addressing the LRA's operations makes it relevant to investigate the AU's response to its activities. The ISS (2010:3) writes that the AU has actively sought to promote efforts to resolve the conflict between the Ugandan government and the LRA, notably through its support for the Juba peace process. The 'Juba talks' were a series of peace negotiations between the Ugandan government and the LRA. For instance, on 25 August 2009, the PSC issued a communiqué which called on the international community to exert pressure on the LRA to stop committing atrocities against civilians and sign a final peace agreement within the framework of the Juba Peace process which was initiated in 2006 (ISS 2010:2). In other words, the AU has supported efforts of negotiating with the LRA. According to Solomon Dersso (2010 [interview]), even to try to bring a rebel group "to the table" is an attempt at compromise, even if it will not have an equal say as governments.<sup>21</sup>

However, while supporting the Juba talks, the PSC has at the same time supported military operations against the LRA. On 22 December 2008, the Council issued a communiqué on the situation in the Eastern part of the DRC<sup>22</sup> (ISS 2010:1). The PSC assessed a joint operation being waged by the DRC, Uganda and the government of southern Sudan<sup>23</sup> against the LRA in the DRC. Thus, in December 2008 the Ugandan military went through with an incursion into the DRC in pursuit of the LRA, what has been called the "Operation Lightning Thunder". This operation was supported by the governments of the DRC and Southern Sudan (Atkinson 2009:1, 13).

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<sup>21</sup> Negotiating with the LRA has proved difficult. Several times the peace talks have broken down because the LRA has withdrawn from the process and rejoined the talks at a later stage (Quinn 2009:58). However, the point here is to show that the AU has supported efforts of including a militia group in peace negotiations, but that the Union's approach in this matter relates to the politics of the Ugandan government.

<sup>22</sup> The same communiqué as was mentioned above on the presence of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe in the Eastern DRC.

<sup>23</sup> The LRA has also committed atrocities in Southern Sudan as part of its regionalizing its sphere of activity.

These examples show how the AU has developed somewhat dissimilar ways of dealing with the FDLR and the LRA. The FDLR can be linked to a so-called transnational identity, that is, their identities belong just as much in one country as in another. Currently, the FDLR includes combatants as well as family members of the combatants, refugees, and political opponents that have been forced to flee from Rwanda due to increased harassment of the opposition by the Rwandan regime (Bøås 2009:13). This underscores the importance of responding to this exact group in a suitable manner in order to address transnational conflict. Despite the AU's approach of disarmament of the FDLR, a PSD staff member claims that the AU is not ignoring anyone who is "willing for peace" and that wants to be a part of a peace agreement. Rebel groups often make negotiations more complicated. There are always difficulties when it comes to questions of resource sharing and power sharing, and the groups often withdraw from the process. Still, the AU is willing to negotiate with them (PSD staff member 3 2010 [interview]). Building on this logic, the FDLR should be attempted included in peace negotiations. In contrast to the claims above, I will rather argue that the extent to which the AU addresses rebel groups by encouraging the inclusion of them in peace negotiations is based on the demands of the regimes in the region. This can be illustrated by elaborating on Rwanda's politics towards the FDLR and Uganda's approaches to the LRA.

### ***5.2.2 Supporting the politics of the Rwandan and Ugandan regimes***

Any understanding of Rwanda's foreign policy in the DRC must begin with the effects of the genocide, and especially how the ex-FAR and Interahamwe launched attacks into Rwanda (see section 3.2.3). However, although Rwanda has acknowledged that the FDLR no longer constitutes an immediate threat to the government (see section 3.2.5), the country's leadership has continued to stress the importance of disarming the group (Curtis 2005:7). According to Curtis (2005:10), Rwanda is unlikely to negotiate directly with the FDLR and insists the group will receive no concessions for laying down its arms and repatriating. Rwanda's skepticism about the FDLR relates to several years of being subjected to destabilizing cross-border incursions by an

insurgent force whose members were perpetrators or otherwise identified themselves with the 1994 genocide (ibid). The AU cannot operate independently of this fact, and it therefore influences the responses of the continental organization. It is of course obvious that peace negotiation also needs the participation of governments involved. However, the fact that the AU encourages an approach aiming at disarming the FDLR illustrates that the organization's politics is determined by the Rwandan regime's way of dealing with the militia.

Regarding the LRA, the Ugandan government has tried to put down LRA insurrections militarily. These military responses have been numerous and largely unsuccessful (Quinn 2009:59). The Operation Lightning Thunder is an example of how Ugandan military attacks have failed to defeat the rebels (Atkinson 2009:17). According to Atkinson (2009:17), no military solution to dealing with the LRA appears realistic at this time. In other words, unsuccessful military attempts may have compelled the states in which the LRA is operational to try to negotiate with the militia. This can explain why the AU, when the Operation Lightning Thunder proved unsuccessful, continued supporting the Juba Talks. The Ugandan government has conducted military operations against the LRA while at the same time being a part of a process that aims at negotiating with the group. When the AU has supported both these strategies to dealing with the LRA within the same period of time, the organization is supporting the alternating politics of state actors. Although the FDLR still represent a major challenge to peace in the Great Lakes, the militia is militarily too weak to destabilize Rwanda (ICG 2009). The LRA, on the other hand, has proved difficult to weaken by military means. The degree of military threat and the regimes' capacity to respond to these groups may therefore help explain the different approaches. Furthermore, the motivation of these state actors is not necessarily to contribute to conflict management. As will be thoroughly discussed later in this chapter, they have their own interests in the current conflicts. However, the discussion about the AU's approach towards the FDLR and the LRA serve as an illustration of the way the organization's politics might not contribute to conflict management because it is determined by state actors whose motivation is not necessarily to create regional peace and stability.



It is important to point out that in an African context, the views and interest of these state actors cannot necessarily be equated with national interest. As written in chapter 2, the African state is characterized by weak states but strong regimes. The African state cannot be considered as a rational unitary actor. Concepts such as “national interest” must therefore be handled with care. The DRC can be used as the clearest example. What is its national interest, the views expressed by President Kabila or those expressed by the main rebel groups? Different groups control their own vast areas and it is unreasonable to say that the area controlled by Kabila is most representative for the Congolese state (Dokken 2008:24-25). Therefore it is important to point out that when arguing that the AU is supporting the interests of its member states, I speak of the interest of “state actors” and “regimes” rather than national interest.

### **5.3 The importance of a multidimensional notion of security**

As written in section 1.3.4, alternative security concepts are important to discuss in relation to transnational conflict. However, I will argue that this “new” security cannot be separated from traditional state-centric approaches. In order to contribute to the management of transnational conflict, the AU's approaches must be based on a notion of security that encompasses both state security and non-military security aspects. This can be illustrated by elaborating shortly on the security threats caused by the Great Lakes refugee crisis.

A serious obstacle to lasting peace in the Great Lakes is the massive flow and dislocation of people. This includes refugees moving between the countries, and also a large occurrence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).<sup>24</sup> Refugee flows from the various domestic conflicts in the states in the region interact with one another, with transborder groups and trading networks, as well as with various forms of institutions (Dokken 2008:68). In other words, these groups become part of processes of trans-

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<sup>24</sup> Internally Displaced Persons means “[...] persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internally recognized state border” (AU 2009b: article 1k).

state regionalization. Many of the explanations of conflicts in Africa have focused on the ethnic dimension of conflict. For the purpose of this thesis, the relevance of this perspective is foremost related to the development of transnational identities. Many IDPs, as well as refugees, have such identities (ibid:69). This underscores the importance of also discussing the challenges related to IDPs, and not only refugees, in connection with transnational conflict.

At their most basic level, refugee crises are caused by threats to human security. People become refugees because they fear for their personal safety. However, the presence of refugees can also pose serious threats to state security. For instance, refugee camps in the DRC allowed militants (such as the FDLR) to have a base from which carry out attacks against Rwanda during the Second Congo War. This created a continuing security crisis for the Rwandan regime (Mills and Norton 2002:17). In other words, human security cannot be separated from state security. As Dokken (2008:70) argues, the concept of state security cannot either be separated from the concept of international security. The international security aspects of the Great Lakes refugee crisis have been widespread - they have ranged from local cross-border destabilization to the regionalized war in the DRC. The web of allies and enemies is complex and far-reaching and involve actors at most levels of society (ibid). Thus, an all-encompassing security approach is necessary in responding to transnational conflict.

### **5.4 The AU's approach to security**

As written in section 3.3.3 the AU subscribes to a multidimensional concept of security, that is, one that includes both a state-centric approach as well as non-military aspects (AU 2004: article 6). Such an understanding of security provides a good platform for the management of transnational conflict. In the following, I will show that the AU has developed a legal framework that acknowledges the importance of for instance human security, especially when it comes to protecting refugees and IDPs. However, the weaknesses of the Union's security approach become apparent when the state-centric approaches stand in opposition to the protection of other types of security.

There are numerous AU treaties and policy decisions that either directly or indirectly governs its activities in favor of victims of forced displacement.<sup>25</sup> According to Tigere and Amukhobu (2009:49), these treaties have been developed in response to the regional specificities of refugee and human rights problems in Africa. On 23 October 2009, at a 'Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa', the AU adopted the 'Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa' (the Kampala Convention) and the 'Declaration on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa' (the Kampala Declaration) (AU 2009b, AU 2009c). The Kampala Convention is the first regional instrument in the world to impose legal obligations on states in relation to the protection and assistance of IDPs, and its adoption has been described as an historic accomplishment<sup>26</sup> (IDMC 2010). It can be argued that such documents in general provide important legal developments concerning the protection of refugees and IDPs (Beyani 2006:187). Further, emphasizing the responsibility states have in protecting refugees and IDPs is an important step in addressing human security. For instance, the Kampala Declaration

“Call upon member states [...] to sign and ratify treaties, conventions and covenants relating to human rights, refugees, the protection of civilians during armed conflict, civil, political and socio-economic rights as well as the prevention of large scale arbitrary population displacement” (AU 2009c: article 3).

Documents emphasizing alternative security notions provide an important foundation for the management of transnational conflict, given how human and international security is related to transnationalism. For instance, the Great Lakes refugee crisis, which is a threat to both human and international (regional) security, is strongly connected to a transnational conflict dynamic.

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<sup>25</sup> At the core of the regional refugee protection is the 1969 OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the 1999 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Tigere and Amukhobu 2005:49).

<sup>26</sup> The Kampala Convention has to be ratified by 15 countries to enter into force and be legally binding. It has still only been ratified by two states, and has thus not yet entered into force (IDMC 2010).

#### ***5.4.1 Addressing security issues in a context of neopatrimonial regimes***

Despite a relevant legal framework, the AU still fails to deal with many of the security aspects the organization has set out to address. For instance, the protection of refugees and IDPs must be linked up to the general protection of civilians. It is therefore crucial to discuss the AU's ability to address human security in a context of states that do not provide for the security of their own inhabitants.

According to Dersso (2010 [interview]), the protection of for instance human security requires society to have functioning institutions and system of governance, or else it is difficult to guarantee security for civilians. If state security is pursued by establishing stable democratic institutions, then human security will eventually be protected. However, in Africa, state security is often about protecting the regime rather than trying to secure efficient state institutions (ibid). His argument illustrates how state security and human security is interconnected. It is therefore relevant to discuss whether the AU can address the issue of protecting civilians in a context of neopatrimonial regimes. In such regimes, security might not be about protecting the citizens but rather to contribute to the rulers' own survival.

As written in section 3.3.3, article 4(h) in the Constitutive Act of the AU gives the organization the right to intervene in a member state in "grave circumstances", namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. The right of humanitarian intervention has always been a controversial right in international law. What underlies the humanitarian debate is a perceived tension between the values of ensuring respect for fundamental human rights and the primacy of the norms of sovereignty, non-intervention and self-determination which are considered essential factors in the maintenance of peace and security (Kioko 2003:809-10). This tension is clearly present in the way the AU operates, although it has a legal framework that manages to include the importance of addressing issues relating to human security.

According to Dersso (2010 [interview]), the issue of sovereignty in Africa is still very sensitive and when the AU operates, this is not something it can ignore. A PSD staff

member claims that the AU sees human security as just as important as state security, but the organization cannot overstep the state when it comes to security issues. When it is necessary, the AU will do all it can to call on governments and parties involved to ensure the security of civilians, but the Union will always respect state sovereignty (PSD staff member 3 2010 [interview]). In other words, if the state does not protect its own citizens, the AU can only legally address this issue in the very “grave circumstances” that require an article 4(h) intervention. It is therefore relevant to discuss the possible use of this article in the Great Lakes.

#### ***5.4.2 “The right of intervention” in the Great Lakes***

All of the states in the Great Lakes can arguably be seen as weak, however the main problem regarding state capacity can be found in the DRC (PSD staff member 4 2010 [interview]). The state is weak to such an extent that the government does not control all of its own territory, which again is a reason for the large amount of rebel groups operating in parts of the country and the influx of refugees. The Mobutu regime in Zaire can be viewed as the prototype of the neopatrimonial state (see section 3.2.2). In the post-Mobutu era, neopatrimonialism has continued to affect the way public administration exercises its authority. The DRC has never possessed a monopoly on coercion, nor has it ever enjoyed the rule of law or an effective bureaucracy (Englebert and Tull 2008:111-12). The state's lack of capacity and control of its own territory means that the individuals' need for security cannot be properly addressed.

According to Dersso (2010 [interview]), article 4(h) is not about promising that the AU will be able to intervene in situations where it is necessary, it is promising that it will be no legal obstacle. If the AU is able, it will intervene. To have an obligation and to be able to meet the obligation is two different things (ibid). Article 4(h) can only be exercised with a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly, which consists of the national leaders. In other words it is the exact same rulers of neopatrimonial states that make the decision as to whether to intervene in a member state. The concept of neopatrimonial authority is therefore a part of the AU itself. According to Engel and Porto (2009:91), even where agreement has been reached, the translation into practice

of powers and functions has continued to require patient negotiations among member states. Especially in the field of peace and security progress does not seem possible without continued consensus-building. In a number of ways - particularly at the higher end of the spectrum of AU interventions; that is, the grave circumstances mentioned earlier, member states retain the ultimate decision-making power in the AU, through the General Assembly (*ibid*). Decisions on an Article 4h intervention by the Assembly is by consensus, or, failing which, by a two-thirds majority of the member states eligible to vote (*ibid*, Kioko 2003:816).

Without expressing opinions as to whether the situation in the DRC is as “grave” as to make use of article 4(h), it is still useful to discuss the right of intervention in this analysis. In a context of neopatrimonial regimes that do not provide for its citizens, it is not unlikely that such an intervention clause might be relevant to apply sometime in the future. However, according to Dersso (2010 [interview]) there are few prospects for this article to be taken into use in the DRC, even if it was considered that the circumstances warrant invoking Article 4(h). He claims that one of the most serious challenges to using this article is achieving consensus among member states of the AU. Kioko (2003:822-23) writes that there is a basic challenge of political will at the Assembly level as well as at the level of the regions. The appreciation of the need for intervention may not be shared at all levels.

This touches upon two important aspects of interest for this analysis. First of all it shows how the article 4(h) can be related to transnational conflict in the Great Lakes.

As will be more thoroughly discussed later, several of the regimes in the region have their own interests in the DRC, and it does not necessarily benefit them to create stability in the country. In addition, it illustrates the challenges the AU faces as an interstate organization. Despite a legal framework that incorporates human security issues, the AU’s actions are still determined by state actors. However, Dersso claims that the existence of Article 4(h) serves a purpose, although he does not think it will be taken into use any time soon. There has to be an internalization process for the norm to be taken into use. Certain institutionalized procedures need to be in place for it to be

operationalized. For instance, one needs the legal expertise and the military capacity (Dersso 2010 [interview]). What is important is to note that the AU has started a process of norm institutionalization, although some member states might prefer these norms as not fully implemented (Engel and Porto 2009:91). After all, the AU still underlines that every African state is sovereign, but the focus on how the security is inseparably linked to other African countries means that this sovereignty no longer offers the protection it used to do (AU 2004:article 12(i), Dokken 2008:124). In other words, even if the AU is subordinated to the demands of state actors, it has still managed to develop a legal framework relevant when addressing transnational conflict. To have an intervention clause as part of its peace and security politics is for instance positive with regards to human security. Beyani (2006:190) writes that the objectives of the Union establish a stronger legal foundation for the protection and assistance of IDPs. This is first and foremost related to the article 4(h) of the AU Charter (Beyani 2006:190). The Constitutive Act of the AU is the only international treaty containing such a right (Kioko 2003:807-8). It allows the organization to intervene in a member state despite the will of a regional state with its own interest, that is; if it has a two-third majority.

## **5.5 The AU's influence on state actors**

The definition of transnationalism used in this thesis is one where at least one of the actors is a non-state actor. However, as I will argue, if the AU cannot address government relations it can neither address how governments and informal actors in other countries are entangled in complex networks. In this sense, it is also useful to include a discussion of how the AU is addressing the relationship between states. In addition, the attempts at improving government relations often make reference to informal actors. For instance, attempts at improving relations between Rwanda and the DRC involve how to respond to rebel groups that can be linked to both countries. In other words, trying to improve government relations also include responding to informal groups.

Rwanda and Uganda have been accused of using political events as an excuse to intervene in the DRC for economic purposes. For instance, critics of the Rwandan invasion of the eastern DRC during the second Congo war have accused Rwanda of using the ex-FAR/Interahamwe attacks on the country as an excuse to deploy 20.000 troops to take control of Congolese diamond mines and other mineral resources (Dokken 2008:71). When the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, according different peace agreements had to officially withdraw from the DRC, their governments found different ways to secure their continued presence (see section 3.2.4). According to a PSD staff member, a reason for the continuance of conflict in the DRC is the interests other state regimes, such as Rwanda, have in the country (ex. exploitation of natural resources). “This is something everyone knows but is not willing to do anything about” (PSD staff member 1 2010 [interview]). Another PSD staff member asserts that it is nothing the AU can do about the situation, because the state politics playing out in the DRC is only allegations that none of the parties can confirm (PSD staff member 3 2010 [interview]).

### ***5.5.1 Responding to a “grey zone” conflict***

According to a PSD staff member, the AU cannot respond to the allegations mentioned above because it is not an open conflict. “If it was clear that the countries were involved, for instance by attacking each other, we could do something. It is easier to engage in diplomacy or to send forces when there are open and obvious conflicts” (PSD staff member 3 2010 [interview]). The PSD staff member calls it a “grey zone” conflict, meaning that it is difficult to define both exactly who the actors are and also the interests of the different actors (ibid). This indicates that the AU falls short of responding to conflicts when the states that are not engaged in direct war against each other. This also illustrates how the AU falls short of addressing the impact of informal actors in the Great Lakes. This grey zone conflict is arguably continuing because of trans-state regionalization processes. According to a UN Panel of Experts, the illegal exploitation of the DRC’s natural resources will not be halted because the “[...] necessary networks have already become deeply embedded to ensure that the illegal exploitation continues, independent of the physical presence of foreign armies” (UN



2002:28). It might be difficult to find evidence to the allegations that the Rwandan government itself still plays a role in for instance illegally exploiting the DRC of natural resources. However, these activities are still continuing. Dokken (2008:68) writes that the Rwandan army has put in place economic control mechanisms that do not rely on its explicit presence in the DRC. For instance, it has replaced Congolese parastatals with businessmen from Kigali (ibid). This shows how the Rwandan government can be indirectly linked to the networks plundering the DRC of resources, even though it formally has withdrawn from the country. The neopatrimonial state functioning allows such activity to continue, and illustrates how the processes of trans-state regionalization is dependent on state politics, but is at the same time not an institutionalized process.

It can be argued that a shortcoming in responses to transnational conflict is that informal processes are working to counteract formal processes (Dokken 2010:352). These informal processes are however also dependent on the involvement of state actors. According to Bøås (2009:2), for many of the actors involved in the DRC war is better than peace. This can also be true for state actors, given how these actors are taking advantage of the porosity of borders and the weak government institutions in the DRC. Hence, on one hand there are the formal and transparent processes of regionalism (such as the AU). On the other hand there are the informal and non-transparent processes of trans-state regionalization (Dokken 2010:352). The state actors are at the same time involved in both these processes.

According to Dersso (2010 [interview]), the extent to which other states are still indirectly present in the DRC, they are simply taking advantage of the security situation in the country. If the security situation in the DRC had been different, the problem would have disappeared. Ultimately, the solution is therefore to build a functioning, legitimate state in the DRC (ibid). However, this touches upon a few of the problems mentioned earlier in this chapter. If an important way to address transnational conflict is to build a legitimate state in the DRC, the AU has few means to directly engage in this because it is strongly related to national sovereignty.

However, it must be pointed out that state building as a way to manage conflict is not uncontested. For instance, Ulriksen (2010:376) writes that state-building aimed at creating European-style nation states will not necessarily provide lasting solutions in regions with intertwined conflicts. Rather, state building that “hardens” borders may provoke conflict because it threatens actual practices that have developed without interference from weak states (ibid). However, the aim here has not been to discuss state building as such. Rather, arguing that state building is related to conflict management can serve as an illustration of how the AU, as an interstate organization, fails to address issues related to national sovereignty. Still, it is important to note that whether or not state building is a solution to transnational conflict is a debatable question.

### ***5.5.2 The AU as an arena for improving diplomatic relations***

The AU has to some extent contributed to improving the conflict situation in the region. However, it is mostly limited to the level of formal interstate politics. Having to a large extent focused on relations between the DRC and Rwanda, it is natural to continue addressing the relationship between these two countries.

The Rwandan government’s official diplomatic ties to the DRC were broken after 1998 (Westerkamp et al 2009:11). However, the later years the diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda has improved (Abdellaoui 2010 [interview]). This is partly because of arrangements initiated by the AU.

Regarding the AU’s role in improving such diplomatic relations, there is especially one meeting the later years that is important to elaborate on. In November 2008, a meeting organized by the UN and the AU took place in Nairobi. The summit resulted in confirming the political framework for the 2007 ‘Nairobi Agreement’ (Vlassenroot and Raeymakers 2009:482). In substance, the Nairobi Agreement (‘The Nairobi Joint Communiqué’) is a common approach between Rwanda and the DRC aimed at finding a lasting and concerted solution to the threat posed by the continued presence in the

east of the DRC of illegal arms groups. The communiqué contains the basis of concerted action between the two countries for resolving this problem (AU 2008b: paragraph 31, 39). The joint operation was clear proof of improved diplomatic relations between the two countries (Vlassenroot and Raeymakers 2009:482). The AU asserts that it will continue to support the efforts made as part of the implementation of the Nairobi Communiqué (AU 2008b: paragraph 41).

This illustrates how the AU can help provide political platforms to improve government relations, and that such initiatives have actually contributed to the improvement of Rwandan - DRC government relations. However, these initiatives also demonstrate the challenges the AU faces in contributing to the management of transnational conflict. Although the AU can provide a platform for improving relations between states, important non-state groups are not included in such formal state negotiations. The Nairobi Agreement includes a plan of disarmament of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe and the neutralization of the threat that they constitute for Rwanda and the DRC (AU 2008b: paragraph 14). In other words, it underscores the problems related to responding to rebel groups, something that I have widely discussed in this chapter. Even though improved diplomatic relations is important in responding to conflict between states, this does not eliminate the problems posed by interactions that are not dependent on formal interstate politics.

### ***5.5.3 The “quest for hegemony” and its implications for conflict management***

It has already been argued here that the way the AU's politics is determined by state actors is problematic with regards to the management of transnational conflict. This argument can be followed up by a discussion about the power asymmetries among the Great Lakes states, and how this affects regional conflict management efforts. Such a discussion can be related to the theory of hegemonic stability.

A hegemonic situation is when a single great power or state develops a sufficient preponderance of material resources (i.e. military capacity, economic and financial wealth, security) so that it can dominate (Francis 2006:133). One can distinguish

between global hegemons, which dominate the world, and regional hegemons, which dominate distinct geographical areas (Mearsheimer 2001:40). The theory of hegemonic stability predicts that the presence of a hegemon will create order, and thereby relative peace and stability (Keohane 2005:31). Furthermore, the international community should be based on leadership. The more one power dominates, the more cooperative will interstate relations be. There is a link between power and leadership<sup>27</sup> (ibid:34, Kindleberger 1981:252-3).

Hegemonic stability theory has been exposed to criticism. For instance, Keohane (2005:46) writes that the dominance of a single power may contribute to order in particular circumstances, but it is not a sufficient condition and there is little reason to believe that it is necessary. Further, he argues that the empirical evidence for the general validity of hegemonic stability theory is weak (ibid: 38). However, the point here is not to go into a thorough discussion of hegemonic stability theory. I will not argue that the presence of a very powerful state necessarily will lead to stability. Nonetheless, there are examples in Africa of how powerful states have shown regional leadership. For instance, according to Bøås, Lotsberg and Ndizeye (2009:3), South Africa and Nigeria provides leadership to some sort to their respective sub-regional organizations.<sup>28</sup> There are, however, no similar countries in the Great Lakes (ibid).

According to Francis (2006:134), there are several candidates jostling for hegemonic status in the different sub-regions of Africa. In the Great Lakes, some of the core countries are obviously more powerful than others, and there is considerable rivalry between them. However, none of them can claim the status of hegemony (Bøås et al 2003:3). Ulriksen (2010:375) writes that Rwanda and Uganda have led alliances composed of both state and non-state actors in a battle for regional hegemony. Uganda and Rwanda can be said to be more powerful than for instance the DRC, but instead of

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<sup>27</sup> There are different versions of the theory of hegemonic stability. While the deterministic version of the theory asserts that hegemonic power will lead to leadership, a redefined version does not assert such an automatic link (Keohane 2005:34).

<sup>28</sup> South Africa is a member of the Southern African Development Community, and Nigeria is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Bøås et al (2009:3) argues that the relative success of these organizations can be debated, but South Africa and Nigeria have clearly provided leadership to some extent.

providing leadership they have been involved in activities that counteract interstate efforts rather than enhance it. For instance, they have taken advantage of the weakness of the Congolese state, and been involved in the illegal exploitation of the DRC's natural resources.

The general lack of a clear leader among the Great Lakes states makes it difficult for any of the member countries to provide leadership, vision and not least the ability to set agendas and priorities (Bøås et al 2009:3). Taking as the point of departure that the presence of a regional hegemon that provides leadership can improve a regional conflict situation, it is relevant to discuss the prospects in the absence of such a state. When there is no state that provides leadership, it makes it more important with efficient regional institutions. However, Francis (2006:114) writes that strong, viable and dominant states often determine the contents, interests and directions of regional organizations, mostly at the detriment of smaller and weaker regional members. Furthermore, Ulriksen (2010:375) writes that Uganda and Rwanda's quest for hegemony has left little space for regional organizations.

Thus, this discussion illustrates how the AU's politics is determined by the more powerful countries in the Great Lakes. However, since none of these countries can claim the status of hegemony, but rather has been involved in rivalry in pursuit of exactly that, these countries do not provide leadership. With reference to hegemonic stability theory, it might be that the presence of one powerful state would have improved the state of affairs in the region. However, rivalry among the more powerful Great Lakes states can rather have been said to accentuate the conflict situation, and has left less room for the conflict management efforts of regional organizations.

## **5.6 Identifying mechanisms for the contribution to conflict management**

As written in section 4.5.2, by discussing the extent to which the AU can contribute to conflict management, I can also identify mechanisms that arguably *will* contribute to the management of transnational conflict. First of all, the way the AU's politics is

determined by state actors shows that the organization has an insufficient identification of actors involved in transnational conflict. Security-political efforts must be based on a framework that includes all relevant actors in attempts at conflict management, and the way states are involved in informal conflict processes must also be addressed. A mechanism for the contribution to conflict management must therefore be to include all relevant actors in peace processes. Furthermore, in order to contribute to conflict management, an approach including different security concepts is necessary, not only as a legal framework, but also in practical politics. In addition it can also be argued that a way to manage transnational conflict is by building functioning and legitimate states.<sup>29</sup>

Identifying that these mechanisms must be present, it is somewhat obvious that the AU faces constraints in its conflict management efforts. As Ndizeye (2010 [interview]) asserts, the AU is a member state organization, and can only follow what the member states want and dictates. However, this makes it difficult to contribute to the management of transnational conflict, because such conflicts are characterized by processes and dynamics outside formal interstate politics. The organization has made attempts at regional conflict management in the Great Lakes, for instance through its responses to rebel groups and through supporting attempts at improving diplomatic relations between states. In addition, the AU has developed a legal framework more suited to address alternative security notions than most other regional organizations. This includes the right of intervention in the AU Charter and document imposing legal obligations on states in relation to the protection of IDPs and refugees. Such a framework is important in responding to transnational conflict. Nevertheless, although the AU subscribes to a multidimensional security approach, state security comes first whenever the Union's member states do not protect their own inhabitants. For instance, if a state does not secure its own citizens, the AU can only legally address this in the 'grave circumstances' that require an article 4(h) intervention.

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<sup>29</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, state building as a way to manage transnational conflict can be contested. This will also be mentioned in section 5.7.

The definition of transnationalism used in this thesis is one that includes both state and non-state actors. The AU fails to address aspects of conflict where state and non-state actors are intertwined, that is, processes of trans-state regionalization. The informal interactions depend on the neopatrimonial state and the way it leads the way for interaction across borders. It can therefore be argued that an interstate organization by nature is not suited to respond to the kind of informal regionalization that exist Africa, because the neopatrimonial member states are part of informal processes that works to counteract the formal processes. Furthermore, rivalry among the Great Lakes states creates a situation where there is little room for regional organizations. While the presence of a powerful state that provides leadership can potentially contribute to improve a conflict situation, the situation in the Great Lakes is the exact opposite.

According to Abdellaoui (2010 [interview]), the answer to the problems the AU meets in responding to conflict must lie at the sub-regional level. The RECs are intended to take the lead in implementing AU program related to peace and security. In the next chapter I will therefore analyze the AU's cooperation with relevant regional organizations. Through this discussion, I will also further emphasize the mechanisms that I have argued need to be present in order to contribute to conflict management.

## **5.7 Discussing the theoretical concepts: More emphasis on the state?**

In this chapter I have illustrated how transnationalism and neopatrimonialism creates a particular type of trans-state regionalization in the Great Lakes. Regarding formal regionalist projects such as the AU, it is important that these projects manage to include the transnational aspects of conflict in order to contribute to conflict management. New regionalism approaches is thus important to the extent to which they describe an African reality. I have argued that the AU, as an interstate organization, by nature is not suited to respond to this reality. Again, the new regionalism concepts I have used in this analysis is a useful tool when explaining how the interstate organization falls short of addressing the transnational context in which the Great Lakes conflicts prevail.

The challenge to traditional security studies comes from many directions, new regionalism being one of them. The importance of the region as a new referent or unit for analysis is a central part of this challenge. Hentz (2003:4) mentions the DRC as an example of the importance of a regional referent, because “borders barely matter” in this country. However, although the state is not the relevant unit for analysis in the Great Lakes, the AU’s politics is still determined by state actors. Thus, following up on my findings, one should investigate *how* interstate organization’s politics are determined by state actors by applying theoretical concepts developed for such a purpose. I have theoretically discussed the impact state actors can have on regional conflict management by for instance discussing unequal power relations among the Great Lakes states with reference to hegemonic stability theory. In chapter 7, I will elaborate more on what kind of theoretical concepts that can be suitable for the further study of the actual driving forces behind the AU’s politics.

According to Dokken (2008:85), an eagerness to focus on informal processes and non-state actors has been dominant among theorists of new regionalism. This has often led to the neglect of the formal processes and the state. In section 2.3.3, I argued that the concept of trans-state regionalization tries to consider both the formal and informal dimensions of new regionalism. This makes it a useful concept in this thesis, because it manages to incorporate the complex web of actors in the Great Lakes operating within the context of transnationalism. Nonetheless, trans-state regionalization cannot be associated with an institutionalized process. However, it is also useful to put emphasis on the state as a formal institution. In this chapter it has been argued that an important aspect when trying to address the Great Lakes conflicts is to improve the security situation in the DRC. Underlying such an argument is a perception that state security might be a prerequisite for regional security. As Dersso argues in this chapter, building a legitimate state in the DRC with control over its own territory is one of the most important ways of addressing regional conflict and also the security for civilians. This means that addressing transnational conflict must not only be about the intertwining networks of state and non-state actors, but also about state building. However, as written in section 5.5.1, this perception is debatable, and could be



interesting to discuss further based on a theoretical approach that focuses on exactly state building. For instance, the theoretical approach of *Subaltern Realism* argues that there is a link between warfare and state building and that not much development can come about without domestic-political order provided by the state (Dokken 2008:76).<sup>30</sup> Theoretical arguments regarding state building and conflict has however not been elaborated here, because as argued earlier, the aim has not been to discuss state building as such.

However, regardless of whether state building will improve a conflict situation or not, the state in a context of transnationalism must also address informal actors, being that these groups to a large extent affect both the national and the regional security situation. In that sense, new regionalism approaches is crucial, being that they emphasize the impact of these actors in African processes of regionalization.

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<sup>30</sup> For an introduction to this theoretical approach, see Ayoob, Mohammed (1992).

## **6.0 *Contextualizing the African Union's security politics in the Great Lakes***

### **6.1 Introduction**

In chapter 5 I discussed the AU's initiatives alone, and argued that as an interstate organization, it fails to address many important aspects of transnational conflict. However, given how cooperation with sub-regional mechanisms is an integral part of the security architecture of the AU, it is also essential to discuss the Union's cooperation with relevant sub-regional initiatives. An important aim of this chapter will therefore be to answer my second sub-question, namely whether the AU, in cooperation with relevant interstate actors at the sub-regional level, can contribute to the management of the Great Lakes conflicts.

One of the discussions in this chapter will relate to the challenges of developing a coherent approach to conflict management in the absence of a REC that covers the whole region. Furthermore, in addition to sub-regional initiatives, external actors such as the UN are also engaged in conflict management efforts in the Great Lakes. The aim of this thesis is to focus on "African solutions to African problems". Nonetheless, a few of the efforts of the UN will be mentioned in order to further contextualize the AU's politics. As I will argue throughout this chapter, the extensive amount of actors at the interstate level operating in the Great Lakes might intensify the challenges the continental organization meets in responding to transnational conflict.

Another discussion will focus on the initiatives of the ICGLR and its cooperation with the AU. This is the only institution dealing with peace and security that has all the Great Lakes states as members. In relation to the ICGLR, I will also discuss the Great Lakes as a RSC. The ICGLR has developed conflict responses that take as the point of departure that conflicts develop into regional based clusters. I will argue that such a starting point is very promising regarding regional conflict management. However,

although the ICGLR has developed promising initiatives, it still faces the same challenges as the AU given that it is an interstate institution. Despite obvious attempts at addressing *regional* dimensions of conflict, this does not necessarily mean responding to all aspects of a *transnational* conflict dynamic.

## **6.2 The AU's security cooperation with sub-regional organizations**

The PSC is mandated to harmonize, coordinate and work closely with the conflict prevention and management mechanisms established at the sub-regional levels (Cilliers 2005:11). The PSC Protocol states that “The Peace and Security Council shall, in consultation with Regional Mechanisms, promote initiatives aimed at anticipating and preventing conflicts and, in circumstances where conflicts have occurred, peace-making and peace-building functions” (AU 2002: article 16.2). It is thus of outmost importance to discuss the AU's cooperation with relevant sub-regional initiatives in the Great Lakes. In the following, I will argue that overlapping memberships and the absence of a REC that encompasses the Great Lakes poses serious challenges for transnational conflict management. As written in chapter 2, the Great Lakes can be seen as a RSC. RSC theory presupposes a group of units that have interconnected security concerns. It is therefore important to develop a security approach that aims at dealing with the region as a whole.

### ***6.2.1 Challenges to sub-regional conflict management in the Great Lakes***

During the last ten years, several sub-regional organizations in Africa have established their own mechanisms for the management of violent conflict. Given how transnational factors are important for the sustenance of violent conflict, the necessity of working together is recognized by these organizations (Dokken 2008:79). By incorporating existent regional systems, the AU can take advantage of the RECs comparative benefits, for instance when it comes to their understanding of local conflict. The proximity of the RECs to the issues at hand can lead to a better understanding of different conflicts – which actors and interests are of importance and how best to arrive at a solution (Bogland et al 2008:8,37). In other words, the cooperation with sub-regional mechanisms can be seen as a necessity when responding to transnational conflict. The fact that the AU has developed a security framework that

incorporates different sub-regional systems is therefore a relevant starting point when managing conflicts that cross national borders and involves different types of actors.

The Great Lakes is home to a multitude of regional initiatives. Those recognized as implementing actors of the all-African strategy for peace and security include the East African Community (EAC); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Others regional institutions include the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) and the Tripartite Plus Arrangement.<sup>31</sup> None of these include all the countries in the “larger” Great Lakes area (see section 1.3.4) or have an explicit focus on peace and security only. However, all of them also have these issues on their agenda (directly or indirectly). Therefore, it is undoubtedly a multitude of overlapping agendas with possibilities for duplications of efforts and initiatives. The result is a “spaghetti bowl” of regional organizations (Bøås et al 2009:11) Figure 3 gives an overview of the “spaghetti bowl” of regional organizations in Africa (see appendix).

As mentioned in section 3.3.3, the PSC is equipped with three main bodies. However, when the RECs are supposed to be implementing actors of the continental approach to peace and security, this problematizes the functioning of these bodies in the Great Lakes *as such*. One example is how the different Great Lakes states are members of organizations that to various degrees have developed early warning systems. For instance, the IGAD<sup>32</sup> early warning system represents the most sophisticated system available among the sub-regional organizations (Dokken 2008:139). This does not necessarily provide a good platform for early warning in the Great Lakes, being that this region is not its area of focus. However, although the AU will serve as an umbrella for sub-regional initiatives it also intends to develop an early warning capacity of its own (Dokken 2010:338). Nonetheless, Dokken (2010:350) argues that for the AU to

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<sup>31</sup> This arrangement will be elaborated on in section 6.7.

<sup>32</sup> Uganda is a IGAD member.

have any chance of succeeding with its early warning mechanism, it is essential that cooperation between the continental and sub-regional organizations functions smoothly. In other words, despite the AU's aim of developing an early warning mechanism of its own, efficient cooperation between the AU and the RECs is necessary for the success of the early warning system.

This poses obvious challenges regarding early warning in the Great Lakes, given the various RECs operating in the region, with overlapping mandates and agendas. The same argument counts for the African Standby Force (ASF). The ASF is meant to carry out peace support operations under Article 4(h) and (j)<sup>33</sup> of the Constitutive Act. The force will operate at three possible levels: as an African Force under the AU; as a Regional Brigade at the level of a Regional Mechanism; or at the level of a lead nation intervening on behalf of the AU (Kioko 2003: 823-4).

### ***6.2.2 Challenges related to overlapping memberships and agendas***

An obvious problem related to overlapping memberships is the possibility that some member states may experience conflicting loyalties, a matter that may make it difficult to opt for one solution related to one organization rather than another solution related to another organization (Dokken 2010:351). While the different countries in Africa may have rational explanations for belonging to more than one regional grouping<sup>34</sup>, the numerous groups and memberships presents its own set of challenges. Overlapping memberships, mandates and functions create unhealthy multiplication and duplication of efforts and makes these regional groupings very inefficient (ECA/AU 2006:xiii). This is obviously not the best starting point when responding to complex regional conflict dynamics. It is therefore necessary to discuss how this challenge is addressed by the AU.

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<sup>33</sup> Article 4(j) asserts "[...] the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security" (AU 2000).

<sup>34</sup> The report 'Assessing Regional Integration in Africa II: Rationalizing Regional Economic Communities' mentions political, strategic and economic reasons as important factors for why the states choose to join more than one REC (ECA/AU 2006:52).

According to the joint Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and AU report ‘Assessing Regional Integration in Africa II: Rationalizing Regional Economic Communities’ (‘Assessing Regional Integration’), African leaders and policymakers widely understand that the multiplicity of overlapping memberships of different RECs constrains the integration aspirations of the continent (ECA/AU 2006:1). However, interviewing staff members of the AU working with security related issues, the views expressed was quite different from what this report postulate. According to Admore Kambudzi, Head of the PSC Secretariat, overlapping memberships of different RECs does not pose challenges when it comes to developing coherent security approaches because all the RECs conform to the same peace and security architecture (the APSA) (Kambudzi 2010 [interview]). In addition, a PSD staff member claims that the challenges related to how the Great Lakes states are members of many different organizations are met through the signing of the ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ (MoU) between the AU and the RECs (PSD staff member 4 2010 [interview]). This MoU<sup>35</sup> was signed in 2008, in accordance with article 16 of the PSC protocol, which states that such a memorandum shall be concluded between the AU and the RECs (AU 2002, AU 2008c).

The MoU recognizes the need for closer collaboration between the AU and the RECs in order to promote and maintain peace, security and stability in Africa. Article 3 of the MoU states that “The Parties shall institutionalize and strengthen their cooperation and closely coordinate their activities towards their shared goal of ridding the continent of the scourge of conflicts and laying the foundation for sustainable peace, security and stability” (AU 2008c). However, although the MoU states that “the parties commit themselves to harmonize and coordinate their efforts”, it makes no direct references to the challenges related to overlapping memberships (ibid: article V, article XXII).

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ means the ‘Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the area of peace and security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa’.

It is of course important for the implementation of the APSA that the organizations acknowledge the need to work together. In addition, harmonization and coordination of efforts is a way of responding to the problems of overlapping mandates and agendas, and it can contribute to making overlapping memberships less of a problem. However, when you have a “spaghetti bowl” of regional organizations such as in the Great Lakes, coordination and harmonization of efforts is a challenge in itself. I have argued earlier that dividing Africa into smaller units represented by different RECs is necessary when responding to transnational conflict. Being that the Great Lakes is a region with interconnected security concerns this approach could especially be relevant in this area. However, despite the fact that the architecture of the AU can be relevant for regional conflict management in general, there are still obstacles to conflict management in the Great Lakes because none of the RECs is covering the whole region.

According to Solomon Dersso (2010 [interview]), because of the overlapping memberships the AU has to be the organization that is most active in the Great Lakes. The diversity of RECs makes it difficult to give a mandate to one organization. For instance, Rwanda is not a member of SADC and if SADC was responsible for conflict management in the Great Lakes, Rwanda would not have a say. Therefore the AU has to be the most active organization (ibid). In other words, he argues that a more present continental organization is the best way to respond to regional conflict in the Great Lakes. Article 16 of the PSC protocol states that “the Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa” (AU 2002). The acknowledgment of the AU's primary responsibility in security issues means that the Union should have the ability to be actively involved in the absence of an all-encompassing REC.

The report ‘Assessing Regional Integration’ claims that many projects at the sub-regional level have been blocked by national interest and could be moved forward through political legitimacy from a continental mandate (ECA/AU 2006:107). In other words, two of the sources used in this analysis argue that a higher degree of presence

from the AU is a solution to challenges related to regional conflict management (Dersso 2010 [interview], ECA/AU 2006:107). However, as I argued in chapter 5, constraints because of the interests of state actors is to a large extent present at the continental level. The AU is in many instances blocked by the interest of state actors. Interstate organizations may face many of the same problems when it comes to responding to transnational conflict, independent of whether they operate at the continental or regional level. This can also be related to the battle for hegemony playing out among the Great Lakes states (see section 5.5.3). Also, the conflict management efforts of the AU must be situated within a framework consisting of various external actors in addition to the sub-regional organizations. Opting for an active continental organization is not unproblematic in the Great Lakes, given the large amount of actors operating in the region. The AU's conflict management efforts in the Great Lakes are restrained not only because of the large amount of sub-regional organizations operating in the region, but also because of the presence of a large amount of external actors.

### **6.3 The role of the UN in regional conflict management**

Although the focus here is on the AU as an interstate organization, I will elaborate shortly on the presence of external actors, in order to further contextualize the AU's attempts at conflict management in the Great Lakes. Difficulties with peace implementation are related to the number of parties involved and the degree to which the goals of these parties diverge (Dokken 2008:159).

According to Lemarchand (cited in Schraeder 2006:163), "no other part of the continent has been so thoroughly exposed to the penetration of so many international actors with so few positive results". The role of external actors during the Rwandan genocide can serve as a striking example. The genocide was downplayed by US policymakers fearful of being drawn into a military quagmire. Furthermore, it was fueled by French policies that had provided arms and aid to the Rwandan government that carried out the genocide and facilitated by Belgian policymakers who had withdrawn their military forces at the outbreak of hostilities (Schraeder 2006:163). The



assortment of external, global actors today is multilayered, ranging from the European Union, France, Belgium, to the United States and the UN (Niemann 2007:31). According to Abdellaoui (2010 [interview]), the AU has less leverage in the Great Lakes because other “great powers” are involved, such as the UN, France and Belgium. However, the scope of this thesis prevents me from discussing the role of all of these actors. Therefore I will mainly focus on the UN to illustrate how the number of interstate actors complicates the regional conflict management efforts. However, it is important to note the presence of all these actors, because it can help illustrate how the large amount of actors operating in the region makes the conflict management efforts fragmented.

As written in section 1.3.2, the UN is responsible for peacekeeping in the DRC through the MONUSCU (MONUC) mission. The UN mission has been exposed to a lot of criticism, for instance for failing to carry out its mandate to protect civilians. Abuses have been carried out against civilians by government forces and militia groups, and the UN has been accused of not providing sufficient protection of these civilians (Dagne 2009:2). According to Ulriksen (2010:367), the MONUC mission has gone from crisis to crisis, and has not tried to manage the region as such. That is far behind available capabilities, but the MONUCs lack of success in the eastern DRC serve as a reminder of the consequences of ignoring the regional aspects of conflict. According to Adebajo (2006:158), the UN cannot succeed in the DRC unless it adopts a regional approach to conflicts that prioritizes peace also in the countries surrounding the DRC. The story of the LRA illustrates the flagrant lack of a regional perspective in the mandates and doctrines of the international operations in the region. The LRA has wreaked havoc in four countries, fighting at least four different armies and moving through the areas of responsibility of three or four international forces (Ulriksen 2010:367).

In addition, the UN mission can also serve as an illustration of the challenges facing interstate responses to transnational conflict. The UN underscores how “[...] a strong partnership between the United Nations and the Government of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo to face [...] challenges is needed”, and “urges the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to continue to work together and to agree on a clear set of end-state objectives on the FDLR” (UNSC 2010:2 and paragraph 8). This exemplifies how the UN focuses on interstate relations and the importance of the states working together. Such an approach does not incorporate processes of trans-state regionalization, and in the same manner as the AU, the UN fails to address many aspects of transnational conflict. However, at least the AU has developed a regional approach to conflict, while the MONUSCO mission lacks a necessary regional component.

I have earlier argued that proximity to the issues at hand gives comparative advantages in conflict management. Building on this logic, the AU will have advantages compared to the UN in regional peacekeeping, while the AU will benefit from delegating responsibility to sub-regional organizations (if this cooperation is efficient). According to Kambudzi (2010 [interview]), the AU have a better understanding of African regional conflicts than the UN, because the member states of the AU are more affected by it themselves. He argues that the UN is affected by the maneuvers of powerful countries with economic and strategic interests in Africa, while the AU is closer to the issues at hand and genuinely motivated by the quest for peace (ibid). However, Francis (2006:96) writes that regional organizations such as the AU may be limited by a lack of consensus due to diverse national interests and divisive geopolitics (Francis 2006:96). This is as argued in chapter 5 highly present in the way the AU operates. Thus, the problems related to interstate management of transnational conflict can arguably be present both for global and regional organizations.

According to Adebajo (2006:155), there is a pressing need to establish a proper division of labor between the UN and Africa’s security organizations. The UN must work more closely with the AU and sub-regional initiatives in order to strengthen the security mechanisms (ibid). The AU recognizes the primacy of the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security, and states that the PSC shall work closely with the UN Security Council (AU 2002: article 17.1). In other words, given

the acknowledged primacy of the UN in security issues, a well-functioning cooperation between the UN and the AU is necessary. However, in the Great Lakes the operations of the UN underscores how the conflict management efforts in the Great Lakes is fragmented, and often not aimed at the region *as such*. The ICGLR, however, emerged as a joint initiative between the UN and the AU. As I will argue later, a few of its initiatives are very promising. The ICGLR can therefore be seen as a positive regional result of cooperation between the AU and the UN.

I will also touch upon a United States (US) initiative in the Great Lakes in section 6.7, in order to further illustrate how fragmented conflict management efforts restrain the attempts at creating peace and security.

#### **6.4 The answer to regional security challenges? The role of the ICGLR**

According to Abdellaoui (2010 [interview]), the answer to the challenge of developing a coherent security approach is most likely to be found within the ICGLR. The ICGLR is an attempt to build a regional institution that covers a volatile region with countries and governments with different interests and degrees of involvement in the current conflicts (Bøås et al 2009:2). However, being that the ICGLR is not a REC, it is relevant to discuss what role this institution can and should play in the Great Lakes. The ICGLR is not part of the APSA; rather it is an umbrella organization for cooperation between the states in the region (Ndizeye 2010 [interview]). Nevertheless, the ICGLR emerged as a joint initiative between the UN and the AU, and its responses are not developed irrespectively of the work of the Union (ICGLR 2009: paragraph 2). Rather, the AU and the UN initiated the ICGLR exactly because of a need to tackle the Great Lakes conflicts transnationally (IDMC and IRRI 2002:7). As I will argue in the following sections, a few of the ICGLR initiatives regarding peace and security is very promising. In addition, it is the only regional institution with all the Great Lakes states as members. Given the need to tackle the region *as such*, it can be argued that cooperation between the AU and the ICGLR is necessary in order for the AU to contribute to the management of transnational conflict. Still, the argument I presented in chapter 5 about interstate responses to transnational challenges is also applicable to

the efforts of the ICGLR: Interstate institutions may have inherent flaws regarding the management of transnational conflict.

The ICGLR is an institution with a broad mandate (see section 3.4). Although the themes for programs of action to some extent overlap, I will focus mainly on the area concerning peace and security. The prime effort to operationalize the peace and security projects revolves around border security and disarming armed groups (Church and Jowell 2007:20). Both the AU and the ICGLR have developed border security initiatives. I will compare these two initiatives in order to show the importance of the AU cooperating with the ICGLR in order to contribute to conflict management.

## **6.5 Discussing the AU and ICGLR border management programs**

### ***6.5.1 The AU Border Programme***

The need for management of common borders in the Great Lakes can be linked to the way neopatrimonialism and transnationalism interacts, that is; trans-state regionalization. The neopatrimonial state functioning leads to increased interaction across borders. Staff members of the PSD have argued in interviews that the AU is trying to address the conflicts continuing because of porous borders through the ‘African Union Border Programme’. For instance, a PSD staff member (PSD staff member 4 2010 [interview]) asserts that this program is adopted to increase security in areas where common borders is a source of regional conflict.

The Declaration of the AU Border Programme was launched on June 7 2007. The program aims, among other things, to “[...] promote peace, security and stability through the structural prevention of conflicts” (AU 2007b: article 1(b)). The Declaration also states that it is a “[...] shared commitment to pursue the work of border delimitation and demarcation as factors for peace, security and economic and social progress” (ibid: article 1c(iii)). It is estimated that less than a quarter of African borders have been delimited and demarcated. This situation is fraught with risks because it gives rise to “undefined zones” within which the application of national sovereignty poses problems. The program also underscores the need to address cross-

border criminal activities, and to put in place a new form of pragmatic border management, aimed at promoting peace, security and stability (ibid: article 2a,b and 3).

Despite the aims of addressing cross-border conflict, one can argue that the AU Border Programme does not attend to the main issues at stake in the Great Lakes. For instance it does not address the dissimilar border conflicts one can find in different sub-regions of Africa. However, the AU does note that the implementation of the Border Programme will be effected at several levels - national, regional and continental, which means that the regional specificities can be taken into account upon implementation (AU 2007b: article 5). Nonetheless, a problem with the AU Border Programme with regards to the Great Lakes is that it does not go into dynamics at the borders, but focuses mainly on demarcations and delimitation (Ndizeye 2010 [interview]). Issues such as rebel groups crossing borders, cross-border trade and spread of refugees are examples of border dynamics in the Great Lakes. Such groups take advantage of the opportunities created by the porosity of frontiers. Although the Border Programme does make reference to cross-border criminal activities, it focuses mainly on demarcations and delimitation (AU 2007b). It can therefore be argued that the AU is not addressing the type of regionalization processes characterizing the border activities in the Great Lakes. The AU Border Programme is thus not suited to respond to trans-state regionalization processes, where cross-border criminal activities continue to prosper because of the neopatrimonial regimes' lack of border control.

#### ***6.5.2 The ICGLR program for the Joint Security of Common Borders***

An important ICGLR initiative is the 'Joint Security Management of Common Borders'. According to Bøås et al (2009:9) this is the most elaborate and promising ICGLR initiative, and relates directly to the peace and security part of the programs of action (see section 3.4) and to a lesser degree to the three other dimensions. The ICGLR argues that security issues assume different forms in different parts of the Great Lakes region, and that this obviously provides challenges for the development of region-wide security management structures. The answer to this problem is according

to the ICGLR to divide the region into smaller units based on their particular security dynamics, where joint security management is supposed to entail cooperation in the management border zones. These zones are not built around the states as complete units, but their provinces and districts bordering each other (ibid:9-10). The ICGLR creates 12 overlapping security zones that will allow for individual focus on the specific security issues in each zone. Each zone may deploy its own mechanisms or agreements. The best example is zone 1 (Zone Volcano): Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC, which is considered the most volatile zone, and zone 10 (Zone CEPGL): DRC, Burundi and Rwanda (Westerkamp et al 2009:21).

Bøås et al (2009:10) argues that at least in theory, this is a good idea, because clearly each and every one of these border zones come with their own set of security dynamics and challenges that are important in their own right. It can also be argued that dividing the region into smaller units is a relevant way of dealing with the problems of defining the region. As argued in section 1.3.6, there are different opinions as to where the Great Lakes starts and where it ends. This poses obvious challenges when it comes to developing security strategies. Conflict in the Great Lakes has in some instances spread to such an extent that countries that by no means can be seen as part of the core of the Great Lakes region are affected by it. At the same time, some of the conflict dynamic that the core countries are included in does not pose such a serious threat to more peripheral countries. In this sense it seems relevant to dissect the region into smaller units depending on their security dynamics, while at the same time acknowledging that the region as a whole (however defined) also has its own intertwined security dynamics.

### ***6.5.3 The Great Lakes as a Regional Security Complex***

I have earlier argued that it is relevant to analyze the Great Lakes as a RSC in Barry Buzan's definition (see section 2.4). In his new definition, he replaced the word "states" with "units", which I have argued is an acknowledgement of the fact that states are no longer regarded as the sole important actors when analyses of security are concerned. Further, it is also a useful concept when debating the dissection of the

Great Lakes into zones that are not built around states as complete units. Buzan's new definition allows for security complexes to be built around geographical areas that do not follow state boundaries. In this sense, the creation of security zones can be seen as a further sophistication of the concept of RSCs. The Great Lakes can be seen as a RSC in general, but in addition, the region can be divided into smaller security complexes that are also related to the larger security complex. In addition, geography dictates that RSCs frequently include secondary states situated around the principal rival states at the core of the complex. A secondary state is not in a relationship of *mutual* threat with the core state, but is still of some relevance for the latter's security calculations to the extent that it aligns with other states. This leads to the idea of a web of security (sub)complexes (Dokken 2008:74). Being that the ICGLR has member states that are not part of the core of the Great Lakes region, it manages to incorporate how secondary states are also a part of the security complex to different extents.

The discussion of the AU Border Programme and the ICGLR Joint Security Management of Common Borders shows the importance of the two institutions cooperating. The latter's approach to the management of common borders incorporates the specificities of the security dynamics in the Great Lakes, and can serve as an illustration of the importance of cooperating with sub-regional initiatives. In addition, it underscores the importance of an institution working with peace and security related issues encompassing the Great Lakes as such.

## **6.6 The relationship between the AU and the ICGLR**

On October 26 2010, the AU and the ICGLR signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU defines the modalities of cooperation between the two bodies in areas of mutual support for peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. According to the MoU, the two Parties will, among other things, reinforce the capacity of the Great Lakes Region to anticipate, prevent, manage and resolve conflicts (AU 2010b). In addition, they will

“[...] ensure the coordination and follow-up of actions related to the promotion of measures intended to end exploitation and the use of illegal or illicit exploitation of natural resources,

the proliferation and trafficking of illegal small arms and light weapons, as well as transnational crimes” (ibid).

Given how the ICGLR is the only institution covering the whole region, such elaborated cooperation is promising with regards to regional conflict management. It shows that the AU acknowledges that the Great Lakes is a region with intertwined security dynamics that needs to be specifically dealt with. In addition, the citation above shows that the two organizations acknowledge the need to address transnational aspects of conflict.

With the recent signing of the MoU, it is relevant to elaborate on whether the ICGLR should become a part of the APSA. This would mean that one of the implementing actors of the AU’s peace and security architecture would be responsible for the Great Lakes as a whole. However, there are no plans of making the ICGLR a REC (PSD staff member 4 2010 [interview]). According to Ndizeye (2010 [interview]), making the ICGLR a REC would only accentuate the spaghetti-bowl effect, being that the countries are members of many other organizations as well. As argued earlier, overlapping memberships provides challenges in responding to transnational conflict. According to a member of the PSD staff, coordination regarding security issues is easier with fewer RECs, and it is therefore a good thing that the ICGLR is not a REC (PSD staff member 4 2010 [interview]).

According to Ndizeye (2010 [interview]), more elaborate cooperation between the AU and the ICGLR should be much welcomed, both within its own *raison d’être*. He argues that the institution should find its own niche where it does not “compete” with other organizations (ibid). As mentioned earlier, the ICGLR has a broad mandate, and at the time being the organization is addressing a lot of issues where it has overlapping mandates with other organizations in the region. As I have argued above, the ICGLR has to some extent developed responses that can contribute to conflict management, given how it incorporates how the Great Lakes states’ security concerns are interconnected. A good way of addressing transnational conflict would obviously be to focus on border dynamics, as this includes the impact of informal actors. In addition,



the border security zoning program arguably manages to incorporate how the Great Lakes states can be viewed as a RSC.

## **6.7 The politics of the ICGLR: Whose security?**

Although it is important to include the region as a referent in security studies, it is also important to integrate human security issues. It is important to focus on the primary actors and ask “who is security for?” (Söderbaum 2003:167). As written in section 2.4.1, Dunn and Hentz (2003:180) argues that RSC theory ignores ‘whose security’ is actually being pursued. Regional security does not necessarily lead to the protection of human security. The ICGLR border security zoning system is arguably a good way of responding to regional conflict given how border zones have their own set of security dynamics. However, I argued in chapter 5 that the AU falls short of addressing alternative security notions when the neopatrimonial member states do not protect their own citizens. This is also relevant to mention in connection with the ICGLR and its border programme. As I will argue in the following, although the focus of regional security is an attempt at addressing alternative security notions, this does not necessarily lead to the protection of human security. Hence, such a conflict response does not eliminate the problem of interstate responses to transnational conflict.

According to Westerkamp et al (2009:19), the ICGLR has come to represent a forum where member states can enter into dialogue with each other, especially when other channels remain too political. In the absence of formal diplomatic relations between the Rwandan and Congolese governments, both used the space created by ICGLR to discuss issues of mutual concern (ibid). The ICGLR asserts that it “has been the most important and persistent regional forum for dialogue between its governments [...]”. For instance, the Conference has been involved in the reestablishment of formal diplomatic ties between the DRC and Rwanda, with both countries naming Ambassadors to each others capital (ICGLR 2009:article 32,33ii). However, according to Bøås et al (2009:11), Rwanda and Uganda have expressed resistance to any attempt at placing their difficult and controversial relationship with the eastern DRC under the supervision of a regional multilateral forum such as the ICGLR. Zone 1 is clearly the

tensest and most dangerous area, and one would therefore believe that this zone would receive most attention from the ICGLR zoning approach, but this is not the case (ibid:10). Furthermore, this area also falls under the Tripartite Plus arrangement. The Tripartite Plus is a confidence-building arrangement that was established by the US in 2006 in order to facilitate dialogue and understanding between the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, and with the explicit aim of curbing the activity of what was defined as “negative forces” (for example rebel groups) (ibid). According to Bøås et al (2009:10-11), the complex and embedded relationships that exist between member countries and “negative forces” makes the countries, and especially Rwanda and Uganda, prefer the control of events that the Tripartite Plus offers them to the possible openness and transparency of the ICGLR. This illustrates the difficulties in contributing to conflict management in a context with many actors involved operating at state level. The ICGLR’s most innovative approach is kept at bay by some of its core countries, and the Tripartite Plus arrangement gives these countries a forum where they can control the events on their own terms (ibid).

According to Abdellaoui (2010 [interview]), the Great Lakes security challenges should first and foremost be approached by focusing on the four core countries of Uganda, Rwanda, DRC and Burundi. She argues that the main problem in the Great Lakes lies within the current state of affairs in the eastern DRC, and that these are the countries that are most directly involved or affected by this (ibid). In this regard, Zone 1 should ideally have constituted the very heartland of the ICGLR zoning approach, but it is kept at arm-lengths by two of its most prominent member countries. This illustrates that suspicion and tension is still high in the region and that the only thing that works is what the governments want to work (Bøås et al 2009:14). In the same manner as argued in chapter 5, interstate organizations may prove a suitable platform for improving diplomatic relations between states, but this does not address many important aspects of transnational conflict. It does not address the complexity of the trans-state regionalization one find in the Great Lakes, where states are also entangled in networks that operate separately from institutionalized political processes. This illustrates that a security approach aimed at the region as such not necessarily will

contribute to the management of transnational conflict, although it is an important starting point.

### ***6.7.1 Inclusion of non-state actors in conflict management***

The undeniable non-state features of African conflicts leads to possibilities in terms of involving non-state actors in addition to formal institutions when trying to address them (Shaw 2003:487). Having elaborated on the non-state actors that are part of the causes of conflict, it should also be further emphasized the inclusion of non-state actors in the solution to them. As argued in chapter 5, sufficient identification of actors involved is an important mechanism for the management of transnational conflict.

The establishment of the AU was based on how the many challenges the continent faces required a new way of doing things. Such a new approach should include building partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society (Kioko 2003:810). Hence, the Constitutive Act establishes the 'Economic Social and Cultural organ'. This organ is composed of social and professional groups in member states (civil society) and has an advisory role to all organs of the Union (AU 2000: article 5, 22).

The development of the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development (see section 3.4) included civil society input. Members of academia and civil society organizations participated alongside women's and youth organizations and government representatives. The process of developing the Pact included extensive consultation with both governments and non-state actors throughout the region, aimed at creating a strong sense of ownership (IDMC and IRRI 2008:9). The follow-up mechanisms and process designed by the Pact continue this model of participation. Civil society is an essential partner in mobilizing state and public engagement in the Great Lakes process. There are a variety of opportunities for civil society and other actors to engage in the process of the Pact's implementation and development (ibid: 31).

In chapter 5, I argued that the AU in many ways has developed a legal and normative framework that addresses alternative security notions. The elaborations above show

how the Union and the ICGLR in addition have developed a framework that acknowledges the need to include civil society actors in political processes. Further, both organizations have developed a strong legal basis for the protection of IDPs. The ICGLR has developed its own 'Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons' (the Great Lakes Protocol). While the Kampala Convention was the first regional instrument in the world imposing legal obligations on states in relation to the protection of IDPs (see section 5.4), the Great Lakes Protocol was the first ever sub-regional binding instrument concerning IDPs (Abebe 2009:65). Further, both the Kampala Convention and The Great Lakes Protocol underscore the primary responsibility of the state for the protection of IDPs (AU 2009b: article 5.1, ICGLR 2006: article 3.3). Abebe (2009:166) writes that the involvement of the AU in the ICGLR process and the similarity between the Great Lakes Protocol and the Kampala Convention signals a strong link between the ICGLR and the AU initiatives to elaborate a legal framework for the protection of IDPs.

Thus, the elaborations above further illustrate the way the AU has developed a legal basis that is relevant when responding to transnational conflict, and that this argument is also applicable to the efforts of the ICGLR. Nonetheless, despite relevant legal documents and attempts at civil society inclusion, this does not remove the problem of insufficient identification of actors. In order to contribute to the management of transnational conflict, it is necessary with a suitable approach towards actors that are part of the causes of conflict. However, the ICGLR is an implementing actor of the Nairobi Communiqué (see section 5.5.2) signed by the DRC and Rwanda on the disarming and repatriation of FDLR rebels (ICGLR 2009: article 36(i)). Although cooperation between the AU and the ICGLR should be welcomed, I have argued in chapter 5 that this approach is not a good way to contribute to conflict management.

### **6.8 Conflict management efforts: Regional but not transnational?**

In this chapter I have argued that all the different organizations and countries that are present in the Great Lakes makes it difficult to develop a coherent approach to regional conflict. Further, being that the Great Lakes states are part of an interconnected RSC,

one cannot effectively respond to the conflicts without developing policies aimed at the region as a whole. The best way of responding to transnational conflict within the framework of formal, interstate cooperation will therefore be to delegate responsibility to an organization with all the Great Lakes states as members. At the time being, the ICGLR is the only such institution. Although the answer may not be to make the ICGLR a REC, the signing of a MoU is arguably a positive development in order for the continental organization to provide more relevant responses in the region. All the RECs have liaison offices in Addis Ababa, while the ICGLR has not. One way of increasing cooperation could also be to open an ICGLR liaison office to the AU. That way the institution will be present where the important decisions are being taken (El Abdellaou 2010 [interview]).

It must however be pointed out that more elaborate cooperation between the AU and the ICGLR will not remove the prime problems inherent in interstate conflict management in the Great Lakes. In concrete response strategies, the ICGLR border security zoning system is to some extent a relevant response to the conflict dynamic in the Great Lakes. Nevertheless, even this response mechanism does not eliminate the challenges related to the protection of human security. Thus, the challenges to interstate conflict management efforts can be related to the criticism against RSC theory, and the question of whose security is actually being protected. Further, as follows from my analysis, a regional approach to conflict management in the Great Lakes is absolutely necessary, and the lack of such is one of the reasons why the UN has experienced little success in the DRC. However, although a regional approach is a necessary condition for transnational conflict management, it is obviously not sufficient. In chapter 5 I identified different mechanisms that can contribute to conflict management. However, none of the interstate organizations operating in the Great Lakes can give adequate responses to transnational conflict. This is related to how, sub-regional approaches or not, interstate organizations are determined by the demands of state actors.

Nonetheless, if taking as the point of departure the way conflict response is organized today, with the AU having the primary responsibility, it is better to make use of an institution that covers the whole region rather than to have a spaghetti bowl of organizations with overlapping agendas. After all, the ICGLR tries to manage the region as such, and the program for joint security of common borders is a promising initiative in this regard.

According to Rolf Ree, the Ambassador at the Norwegian Royal Embassy in Addis Ababa, it is natural that the AU is focusing on the relationship between states and trying to preserve the stability in those relations, being that it is an interstate organization (Ree 2010 [interview]). I will further argue that this is where the Union can have most impact. For instance, both the AU and the ICGLR have been involved in improving diplomatic relations between states in the region. Still, even though improved diplomatic relations is important in responding to conflict between states, this does not address the main issues at stake in the Great Lakes; namely how conflict includes both state and non-state actors and is characterized by a type of regionalization that operates outside the sphere of formal state politics.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

In this thesis, I have studied whether the AU, as an interstate organization, can contribute to the management of the transnational Great Lakes conflicts. Firstly I analyzed the AU's initiatives alone, focusing on the Union's approach towards militarized and ordinary refugees, the relationship between the states in the region, and also the networks between states and non-state actors. Furthermore, I discussed the AU's security approach and argued that a multidimensional notion of security is necessary in the management of transnational conflict.

Secondly, I have contextualized the AU's approaches, focusing mainly on the Union's relationship with sub-regional initiatives, especially the ICGLR. In addition, I included a discussion of the role of the UN, in order to point out that although the AU is the main political body in Africa, it operates within a framework consisting of a large amount of interstate actors. I discussed the challenges related to the management of common borders in the Great Lakes, and also the extent to which the AU and the ICGLR have developed a framework including non-state actors in processes of conflict management.

### **7.1 Main findings**

I have argued that as an interstate organization, the AU faces inherent challenges in addressing transnational conflict. An important reason for this is insufficient identification of actors involved. For instance, the discussion of the approaches towards the LRA and the FDLR shows that such rebel groups are identified as causes of conflict, but not part of the solution. I will argue that in order to manage the regional threat that these groups pose, it is also necessary to include them in peace processes. Furthermore, the complex networks existing between state and non-state actors are not addressed. The states are involved in processes working to counteract the formal processes. In the Great Lakes, "war is better than peace" for many of the actors involved, and to be able to contribute to the management of transnational

conflict, the complex interactions creating such a situation must be addressed in security-political efforts.

The AU has developed a legal and normative framework relevant for the management of transnational conflict. For instance, the Right of Intervention in the AU Charter and the legal protection of IDPs and refugees incorporates human and regional security issues. The Union has started a process of norm institutionalization, although some member states might prefer these norms as not fully implemented. However, when the AU's member states in the Great Lakes are part of the causes of conflict, many issues are not addressed even if a legal framework including alternative security notions is in order.

Further, I have argued that the APSA, where sub-regional organizations are supposed to be implementing actors of the continental approach to peace and security, is relevant when responding to regional conflict formations. The RECs are closer to the issues at hand, and therefore have comparative advantages in conflict management. This also counts at the continental and global level: The AU is closer to the issues at hand than the UN, and should therefore be an important organization in peace and security issues. In that sense, the APSA is a relevant framework for responding to regional conflict in Africa. However, in the Great Lakes, conflict management efforts are very fragmented, and few organizations handle the Great Lakes *as such*. In that regard, cooperation between the AU and the ICGLR should be much welcomed, since this is the only organization with peace and security on its agenda that has the “larger” Great Lakes as its area of focus.

Furthermore, the ICGLR program for joint management of common borders acknowledges the way security dynamics vary throughout the region. It is therefore a promising initiative to partition the Great Lakes into smaller units depending on their exact security dynamics. However, although acknowledging that the Great Lakes conflicts are intertwined, one can still pose the question of whose security is actually being protected. The ICGLR's politics is, in the same manner as the AU, determined



by state actors. By extension, human security issues are not necessarily addressed. In Africa, security is often about securing regime survival within the context of weak states. Thus, a regional approach to security does not necessarily mean contributing to the management of transnational conflict, given the flaws inherent in an organization depending on the support of its member states: Adequate responses to transnational conflict must address the linkages between state and non-state actors. In that sense, the AU faces major challenges. Informal actors are identified as causes of conflict, but given the interest of state actors, they are often not included in the solution to them.

It must be pointed out that not all aspects of transnational conflict have been directly touched upon in my analysis; for instance the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. However, these issues are indirectly included in my discussion about the different actors involved. The networks sustaining such activities are dependent on the involvement of both state and non-state actors, and the ability to cross porous borders in the region. Thus, the main argument is that conflict management efforts need to identify all the different actors and the linkages between them. Furthermore, not only states can be included in the attempts at conflict management. My focus has been on the AU as an *interstate* organization. In that sense, an analysis identifying the range of different actors and the networks between them has been necessary in presenting my main argument: Within a context of neopatrimonial regimes, the AU cannot address many aspects of transnational conflict. "War is better than peace" for many actors involved – including the Great Lakes regimes.

## 7.2 Implications for further research

The purpose here has been to evaluate the AU's politics based on a description of the processes characterizing the Great Lakes conflicts. Based on my conclusions, I will argue that further studies should investigate the actual driving forces behind the Union's politics based on theoretical concepts developed for such a purpose. One example could be a perspective within the field of new regionalism called "regime boosting regionalism". This perspective emphasizes how many ruling regimes and political leaders in Africa engage in symbolic and discursive activities, whereby they praise the goals of regionalism and regional organizations, sign cooperation treaties

and agreements, and take part in “summitry regionalism”, but without having a commitment to or bearing the costs of policy implementation (Söderbaum 2010:6). This is relevant in connection to my argument about how the AU has developed a relevant legal and normative framework, but this is not reflected in practical politics. Regime-boosting regionalism points to how regionalism is instead used as an image-boosting instrument whereby leaders can show support and loyalty for each other, which enables them to raise the profile, status, formal sovereignty and image of their often authoritarian regimes, but without ensuring implementation of agreed policies (ibid:7). Having shown how the AU’s politics is determined by state actors, such a perspective can potentially explain the driving forces behind the AU’s extensive focus on security cooperation, and could be further elaborated. The purpose of this thesis has however been to evaluate the AU’s contribution to transnational conflict management.

As mentioned earlier, mainstream IR theory does not capture the essence of security cooperation in Africa. Thus, arguing that other theoretical concepts are necessary in the study of the AU, I will still emphasize new regionalism approaches. Despite how the AU’s politics is determined by state actors, it is important to incorporate the networks between both state and non-state actors, and emphasize how “the politics of summitry” is also connected to informal politics and actors.

I have also mentioned the possibility that state building is a way to manage transnational conflict, but that this perspective is debatable. Further studies could therefore investigate the extent to which state building can contribute to conflict management in the Great Lakes. Last, it is crucial to mention that regarding the Great Lakes conflicts, it is also important to put focus on local aspects of conflict, despite how I have studied transnational conflict here. Such conflicts are also driven by internal dynamics despite the significant cross-border ramifications. However, localized conflicts also become intertwined, and create regional and transnational conflict dynamics. Thus, in order to get a satisfactory understanding of the complex conflict dynamic in the Great Lakes, both a local *and* a regional perspective is necessary.

# Appendix

Figure 1:



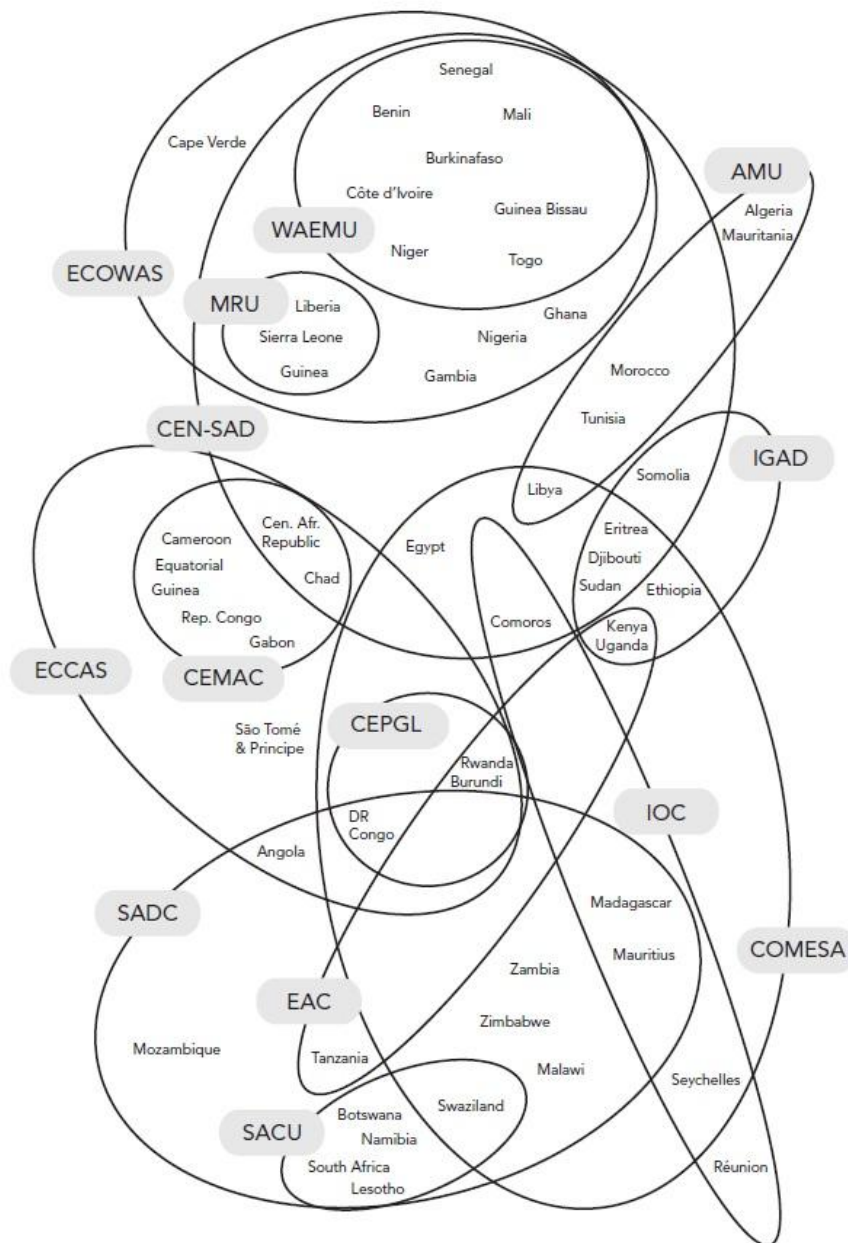
Map of what I have defined as the “core” of the Great Lakes region (the DRC, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi) (Mappery 2004).

The map displays the following countries categorized by their status:

- IC/GLR Member Countries (Green):** Egypt, Sudan, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi, and South Africa.
- Co-opted Countries involved (Blue):** Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

Other countries shown in grey include Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome & Principe, and Cape Verde.

**Figure 3:**



Overview of the “spaghetti bowl” of regional organizations in Africa (Manuel 2008:34). This figure shows that the “larger” Great Lakes area is home to a multitude of regional organizations such as CEPGL, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS<sup>37</sup>, IGAD and SADC. Regional institutions such as the Tripartite plus arrangement and the ICGLR are not part of this overview.

<sup>37</sup> Although this figure is from October 2008, it has not included that Rwanda left ECCAS in 2007.

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